

## Chapter 1 The Awakening

Harry Potter sat in his bed in Number 4 Privet Drive, wallowing in grief, misery, the whole works. With the death of his godfather Sirius Black hanging over his head, and the prophecy in front of him, the almost sixteen year old felt that going right in his life. And if that wasn't enough, the shame of using a Cruciatus Curse and the knowledge that he will probably have to use at least one more Unforgivable Curse brought him down immensely. Then there was the fact that Voldemort possessed him, something so intense and painful that Harry shuddered whenever he remembered it.

But Voldemort, and Bellatrix Lestrange had taken so much from him. And when he replayed the image of Bellatrix killing Sirius, Voldemort killing Cedric, his mother's last pleas for mercy for her son, his father's brave but futile stand, he knew one thing. He could kill. He would kill.

But I don't want to be a murderer! Harry thought desperately, his head whipping around as if the prophecy would leave his mind if he shook it.

Yes you do. You wanted to hurt Bellatrix. And you will murder Voldemort. A voice sneered inside of him.

The voice had begun appearing more and more often in Harry's mind, soon after the disastrous incident at the Department of Mysteries, constantly giving him his darkest thoughts and feelings, his dark side. The side that made him so similar to Voldemort.

I don't want to kill anyone! Harry cried out to the voice.

You have no choice. The voice said smoothly, not the least bit perturbed. Except one, of course. Just let me handle all of your enemies. I'll take care of everything for you. Trust me.

The voice had made this offer many times, and each time, Harry was tempted to give in, just let everything go and let the darkness swallow him whole. But something tugged on him. He had no name for this

nameless rope that held him from the abyss, but each time, he was grateful for it.

I won't. I can't let the darkness control me. Harry shook his head, and the voice went silent again, waiting, lurking just beyond his sight, in the shadows of his mind.

Harry stepped out of Number 4 Privet Drive to take a walk, a habit he had taken to recently. It gave him a quiet moment to think, without the knowledge that the Dursleys were just outside the door, without the 'normalcy' of Privet Drive.

He had taken another duty too, to scout out the area for any signs of trouble. So far, he had easily picked up on people watching him, the Order members. Tonks was easy enough to spot; her dead clumsiness gave her away easily. Dung was a little tougher, but if Harry smelled the air, he had the scent of cheap tobacco. Moody's wooden leg made it easier to hear him, but Moody could track him the best with that blue eye of his.

Harry stopped for a moment, pretending like he was enjoying the fresh air, while he listened and smelled the air. No tobacco, no strange noises, no clunks. None of the three Order members Harry could pick up on were around. Someone else was on duty tonight.

Harry continued walking, thinking he might have given the game away already. He had gone for quite some time till he reached the park. He moved towards the swings to sit there and think, an old habit of his because no one wanted to be his friend in primary school. It was quite dark now, and the streetlights had burned out near the swings, but Harry paid it no mind, lost in his own thoughts.

Harry reflected on the last few weeks, how none of the Order members had been allowed to tell him anything, how his friends weren't allowed to say anything and their letters were scarce now, and the few that came treated him like glass, or a bomb that would blow at the least provocation. That was a better description of him last year, though. This year, Harry didn't know how to react. It was as if the world had suddenly shifted on its axis.

When am I going to be told something? Dumbledore tells me I'm the only hope for beating Voldemort, but I can't know what the bloody hell he's up to?

The sudden crack of someone Apparating brought Harry's thoughts back to reality as he whipped his wand out and turn towards the source. As he did this, however, another voice, to his flank, cried, "Crucio!"

The brutal feeling of hundreds of white-hot knives plunging into every part of his body engulfed Harry as he collapsed, but managed to catch sight of three Death Eaters, one of which seemed to be the leader from the way the others moved.

The lead Death Eater released Harry from the Cruciatus, and in a chillingly familiar voice, called out, "That's how you do a Cruciatus Potter!"

Harry's head whipped towards the Death Eater he knew as Bellatrix Lestrange. The woman who killed Sirius. Unbridled hatred flowed through his veins, and he reached for his wand on the ground slowly, all the while thinking, Where the hell is the Order?!

"Bellatrix." He spat out, and he pointed his wand towards her. "ADFLICTATIO!"

The Pain Curse flew towards Bellatrix, who barely had time to block with a Shield Charm. The other two Death Eaters, along with Bellatrix, chorused, "CRUCIO!"

Harry collapsed under the combined strength of three Cruciatus Curses, their power equal or probably greater than one of Voldemort's Cruciatus Curses. He felt it slightly lessen, and his numbing brain registered that one of them had released their hold on him. He heard who it was a moment later. "Do you like that, ickle Potter?" Bellatrix asked in her baby voice. "Such a strong little boy, aren't you? Let's see how much longer you last before you crack, like the Longbottoms."

Harry remembered Neville's parents' vacant expressions, and power born from desperation welled up within him. He threw them off, just barely, causing the Death Eaters to jump back in surprise as Harry collapsed, his tortured body screaming in pain.

"Looks like ickle Potter is stronger than we thought. Let's see how he likes Dementies."

Harry's blood froze as he managed to raise his head weakly, and saw two Dementors gliding towards him. Oh God, please say that any Order members weren't kissed. Please say that it was Dung, and he needed to leave. Please, say there isn't another death on my hands.

Harry staggered to his feet as the coldness enveloped his body, giving him the strangest sensation of aching, burning pain and freezing numbness. The voices of his long dead parents came flying through the pain, but instead of comfort, it brought nothing but aching horror to the young man's battered and weary body.

"Not Harry! Not Harry! Please --"

"Not Harry, please no, take me --"

"Stand aside, you silly girl..."

"Not Harry! Please... have mercy... have mercy..."

"Can you hear your parent's dying cries, Potter?" Bellatrix's mocking voice rang out, and Harry felt a hatred for this woman who had taken his godfather from him, who took Neville's parents away, who was a servant to Harry's greatest foe. He wanted to kill her, to make her suffer like everyone she hurt. At that moment, his greatest wish was to simply make her suffer. And then, something happened.

The numbing chills of the Dementors gave away to nothing as Harry stood up, his body acting of its own accord. A new feeling enveloped Harry. A dark, possessive, powerful, feeling.

Harry tried to scream, but his voice no longer responded. He tried to move his hands, but nothing happened. It was as if the darkness had

swallowed him whole. It felt so different from the feeling when Voldemort possessed him. That was an attack from the outside, a snake. This was shapeless shadow from the inside, and it wanted out.

It's my turn now, Harry.

This was the last thing that Harry heard before darkness overtook him.

"I'm free." Harry's voice said, though not his voice. It was much lower and had a strange quality to it, an unnamable, ethereal and yet powerful quality that chilled even the darkest hearts.

"Be gone, servants of Darkness. I do not need you right now." Harry's voice commanded, and the Dementors actually nodded, and glided away to a distance.

"What the bloody hell?" One of the Death Eaters swore, and raised his wand. "Cru-" He only got partway through the curse as Harry's hand raised itself up and a black jet of light hurtled out of it, and impacted the Death Eater, who was thrown back into a tree, which promptly snapped. Both of the tree and the man, that is.

Bellatrix looked stunned for a moment as Harry turned his head towards her, his once bright and lively green eyes now soullessly black. "Now, it's your turn, Bellatrix Lestrange. I'm going to make you suffer, like you've made others suffer." Harry's voice said this so coldly that Bellatrix looked afraid for a moment, before regaining her confidence.

"Is that so? Fine then! Do your worst. You can't cast a Cruciatus Curse to save your life." Bellatrix sneered.

"My worst will make Voldemort seem merciful." Harry said coldly, unaffected by Bellatrix's taunts. He was much too clever to be caught on criminal charges. His revenge would be far more sinister.

Bellatrix seemed angered by the use of Voldemort's name. "The Dark Lord wanted you for himself, but I think he will let this slide." Bellatrix said, her false bravado not fooling the darkness inside Harry. "Avada-"

She never got any farther than that, as Harry raised his wand and pointed it directly at her head, saying nothing, but Bellatrix could literally feel the power emanating from Harry, and it froze her with terror. "Supremus Existimatio!" The terrible voice cried, chilling those who heard its sound like a death bell ringing.

Then, she felt it. Suddenly, guilt rained down upon her. Guilt that she so richly deserved, yet never received. And pain. Agonizing pain, twenty times worse than any Cruciatus the Dark Lord could inflict. She collapsed, screaming in absolute agony as years of pain and guilt and torment came crashing down upon her. Harry, or whatever was inside of him, controlling him, was unleashing every terrible memory from his shattered and painful existence, all the guilt, misery, loneliness, sorrow, despair, torment, neglect of fifteen years came crashing down in one terrible moment.

The remaining Death Eater, who had been frozen in sheer terror, galvanized into action at last with the tortured screams of Bellatrix Lestrange calling out into the night. As he ran, he heard footsteps behind him he turned instinctively. The sight behind him, now fully visible in the light of the streetlight, paralyzed him.

This was a demon. His soulless black eyes were without light and looked almost dead, a dark abyss that would suck anyone who dared look into them. His features, once kindly and handsome, seemed warped and twisted. Even the area surrounding him seemed to be warping and twisting with some strange dark malevolence, as if his very presence corrupted the entire area.

"Ah yes, what to do with you?" Harry's once kind voice said coldly.

"Please... let me go... I don't know anything! I swear!" the Death Eater begged, "I'll fight on your side!"

"I have no need of weak fools who have no backbone. Die." Harry's voice rang out, and he raised his hand and threw it forward, and the Death Eater dropped, his now blank eyes rolling into the back of his head. If anyone was listening closely, they might have heard a low sound, similar to glass breaking.

"Now, was my worst enough, dear Bellatrix?" Harry asked mockingly, turning towards his gasping victim, who looked at him with abject terror in her eyes.

"Yes." She gasped out. "That was far worse than any Cruciatus Curse from the Dark Lord. What the bloody hell are you?"

"I am the true Harry Potter. I am the final instrument of destruction for you and your master." The soulless black of his eyes now held a small amount of satisfaction at the fear that flitted across Bellatrix's face.

"Now it's time for you to go to Hell, Bellatrix. I've already reserved a place for you."

One last tortured scream was the last anyone ever heard of Bellatrix Lestrange.

"Harry? Harry! Wake up!"

Harry opened his eyes tiredly, the aftereffects of the last hour getting to him. "Wha-" He said tiredly, before he remembered what happened. Bellatrix. Cruciatus. Dementors. Mum and Dad screaming. So cold...

"Harry?" The voice asked, this time less urgent.

"Get Potter up, Lupin. We need to get going, now." Another voice growled.

The identity of the voices became clear as Harry began reassembling himself again. "Professor Lupin? Professor Moody?" He asked wearily.

"Wotcher, Harry. Come on. Up." Tonks said, her normally cheerful tone somber and subdued.

Harry felt himself being pulled up, two arms holding him up as he steadied himself. "Where's Bellatrix?!" Harry asked worriedly. "What happened? Who was on duty?"

“Not here, boy.” Moody growled. “Come on. We’re going back.”

“Going where?” Harry asked guardedly. “How do I know you’re who you say you are?”

“How do we know you’re who you say you are, boy?” Moody countered.

“Ask me anything I would know, then.” Harry said confidently, then added, “And I’ll ask you something.”

“Fine.” Moody growled. “At least you’re being cautious. Lupin?” Moody asked, looking towards the younger man.

“Harry, who was your father?” Remus asked, and Harry looked confused for a moment, until he got it.

“Prongs, because of his Animagus form.” Harry responded, and Remus grinned at him.

“That’s him. Your question?”

“What was the question you asked me the last time you picked me up, Professor Lupin?” Harry asked, turning towards the tired looking werewolf.

“What you’re Patronus was, and you said it was Prongs.” Remus said, smiling. “And it’s Remus, or Moony.”

“Okay then let’s go.” Moody rumbled, “We don’t have time for this.”

“Where are we going?” Harry asked, but the now somber expression on Remus’ face told him all. “We’re going to Num-“ Harry started incredulously, but Moody cut him off.

“Not here! Trees have ears!” Moody said sharply, and they nodded.

“How are we going to get there?” Harry asked, and Lupin pulled out a dilapidated trainer.



“Portkey. Let’s go, Harry.” Lupin said kindly. Harry nodded numbly, and moved closer, and grasped the shoe. “Portus.” Remus said quietly, and Harry felt a tug on his navel suddenly.

When he finally got all his bearings, he found himself standing in front of one of the many places he’d rather never see again.

Number 12 Grimmauld Place.

AN: I hope this chapter was good enough that you’ll read the rest of the story! I know it was short, but it will get better! Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 2 Fade to Black

Harry stood in front of Grimmauld Place for a moment, unable to fully comprehend the fact that he now stood in front of his late godfather's home. Sirius' home.

Before Harry could protest, the Order members, who were determined to keep him out of sight, ushered him inside. There, Harry caught the glimpse of the same dreary, dank, depressing surroundings around him before a flash of red hair appeared. "Harry!" Molly Weasley cried, holding him in one of her famous bear hugs. "You're okay!"

"Shhhhh, Molly." Remus whispered, motioning towards the painting on the wall.

"Mrs. Weasley, I'm okay, but I need to breathe..." Harry gasped out, and Mrs. Weasley released him, ushering him towards the kitchen.

"Oh you poor dear, stuck with those nasty muggles and now Death Eaters!" Mrs. Weasley fretted, and Harry opened his mouth to say he was fine, when he was again assailed, this time by a brown, bushy haired female.

"Harry!" Hermione said fearfully, "You're okay!"

"I don't think he'll be for much longer, if you don't let him breathe, Mione." Ron chuckled, obviously amused by his friend's plight. Hermione gasped and let go, immediately asking, "Are you hurt? What happened?"

"I'm-" Harry started, before, for the third time in a few minutes, yet another female body tackled him, again female, but with red hair. Harry gasped, breathing in the soft fragrance of apple blossoms before he managed, "Ginny... Air..."

"Oh!" Ginny Weasley cried out, getting up quickly, blushing furiously, "Sorry Harry. We were all so worried!"

"I'm fine... But what happened?" Harry asked confusedly.

"You don't know?" Ron asked incredulously.

"No. All I remember is that Bellatrix and two others hit me with a Cruciatus, then they sent Dementors after me. I blacked out." Harry said, shrugging, barely noticing the horrified gasps from his three friends.

"Harry, two of the Death Eaters are dead." Remus said, looking straight into Harry's eyes. "One of them seemed to have been thrown into a tree. His spine snapped on impact. The other... it could be like an Avada Kedavra, but no trace of it was shown."

"Was one of them Bellatrix?" Harry asked coldly.

"No. Bellatrix disappeared. We know she led the attack, but she must have gotten away from whoever it was that saved you." Remus said, an unreadable expression in his eyes.

"Damn." Harry swore.

"But what the bloody hell happened?" Ron asked suddenly.

"It's uncertain, Mister Weasley."

Everyone present in the kitchen jumped, before turning towards Albus Dumbledore.

"Professor Dumbledore!" Mrs. Weasley cried out. "Do you know what happened?"

"I could only find small traces of some strange Dark Magic, but it's different from anything I've ever seen before. I do not know what happened." Dumbledore admitted softly, looking at Harry. "But I am sad to say that Sturgis Podmore is dead."

The silence that trapped the room was deafening to Harry as the guilt swallowed him whole, like a hungry lion devouring the meat it had so recently slaughtered.

“Are you sure you don’t remember anything, Harry?” Dumbledore asked, breaking the silence at last.

“Nothing sir.” Harry said, slightly frosty with his headmaster ever since the events of his fifth year. The trust he held in Albus Dumbledore was shattered, and it might take a long time to rebuild, should it ever be rebuilt.

Many noticed the tone Harry had taken with the Headmaster, when the two of them normally held a sort of grandfather-grandson bond, or that between a mentor and student, and were mystified. Dumbledore, however, merely looked saddened. “Very well then, Mister Potter. I have some unfortunate news, however, concerning you.” He reached into his robe and removed an official looking letter.

Though Harry had only seen it a few times, he had realized what it was. A Ministry letter. Probably informing me that I had broken the underage wizardry laws. Harry thought bitterly. WHERE THE HELL WERE THEY, WHEN I NEEDED TO DEFEND MYSELF! Harry raged, and something flashed behind his emerald eyes.

He opened it shakily, and what he saw did nothing to calm him down.

Dear Mister Potter,

Our intelligence states that at quarter past 6, you casted a Pain Curse in a Muggle Park.

The use of an advanced and dangerous curse in a muggle area is an immense breach of the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery. However, Albus Dumbledore has assured us that you used this curse in self defense, and therefore, we will not be sending Ministry representatives to take your wand.

Despite this, we must insist that you report to a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Magic at 10 AM on July 31st.

Hope you are well,

Yours sincerely,

Mafalda Hopkirk

Improper Use of Magic Office  
Ministry of Magic

Harry paled at the thought of another disciplinary hearing, and looked at Dumbledore, shaking slightly. "Thank you sir, for whatever you did to convince them." Harry said shakily.

"It was nothing, Harry. Although Madam Umbridge was significantly opposed to you being given the benefit of the doubt, Cornelius saw that it was best that you not be disarmed in this time of need." Dumbledore said, twinkling at the mention of Fudge.

However, Harry didn't notice, too furious with one important fact that was implied by Dumbledore. "WHAT!" He roared, and nearly everyone jumped back, "THAT-THAT-BITCH IS STILL IN OFFICE! BLOODY HELL! SHE TRIED TO PUT A FUCKING CRUCIATUS ON ME! SHE TRIED TO SLIP ME VERITASERUM! SHE SICKED SOME BLOODY DEMENTORS ON ME, JUST SO I COULD BE TAKEN OUT OF THE PICTURE! SHE TORTURED ME FOR FUCK'S SAKE WITH THAT GODAMN QUILL! LOOK AT MY HAND!"

Harry glared at Dumbledore while holding up his hand, showing the scar that clearly read, I must not tell lies, who staggered under the weight of Harry's anger. For a moment, everyone present could have sworn that Harry's eyes had become black for a moment, but before anyone could ask, it was gone, and they dismissed it as a mere trick of the light.

However, that 'mere trick of the light', scared the living hell out of everyone, even Dumbledore.

Overlooking this and other signs would cost them many lives, starting with one tonight.

"Harry..." Dumbledore started, but Harry wouldn't hear it.

“AND YOU!” Harry roared, stepping towards Dumbledore, looking into his eyes. Dumbledore was unable to meet his fierce gaze. “YOU LET HER! YOU KEPT HER IN OFFICE! YOU STAYED AWAY FROM ME FOR THE WHOLE GOD DAMN YEAR! AND FOR WHAT! SO THAT I COULD BE CUT OFF! SO THAT UMBRIDGE COULD HAVE FREE REIGN OVER EVERYONE, TELLING LIES! YOU LET HER BAN ME FROM QUIDDITCH, THE ONE THING THAT KEPT ME SANE! YOU LET HER TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING THAT MADE HOGWARTS RIGHT, AND YOU LET HER DO IT ALL!”

Harry gasped, his emotions reaching a boiling point, and the fury he had felt in Dumbledore’s office had seemingly doubled, and no one dared say anything, not even Ginny, for the sight of Harry’s eyes, black and soulless for a moment, scared them more than twenty Voldemorts. Because it was Harry. Or wasn’t.

“I need to be alone.” Harry finally said, and strode upstairs, heading up to the room he and Ron shared the last time they were there.

“Is that true? Did-did she really-“ Molly whispered, and Hermione cut in.

“Yes she did. I heard it all, along with Ginny, Neville, and Ron.” Hermione said, her head down.

“Albus, you let that monster teach at Hogwarts!” Lupin roared, looking for all the world like he could have taken a swing at Albus Dumbledore.

Dumbledore’s eyes were down as a small, silvery tear trickled down his cheek, echoing that fateful day at the Department of Mysteries. “I...”

“Albus, you’re slipping. Your unwillingness to confront the Ministry has hindered us for a long time, but you let that monster on children.” Moody growled, obviously angered. “I remember our disagreement over these things, Albus, and you believed it for the best. Well, your best has proven wrong.”

"I...I had no idea. I fear that this may be the final stroke that destroys whatever chance I have of repairing the trust Harry had for me." Dumbledore whispered softly.

"You have no idea how much it hurt him that you weren't there for him, sir." Ron said quietly. "I saw how lost he was so many times, he wanted to talk to you, we all knew it, but he was convinced you didn't want to speak with him."

Ginny had said nothing the entire time, but glared at Dumbledore with a fury that echoed her mother's expression.

"Albus, you haven't considered Harry a person for a long time, have you?" She asked, her voice quiet and dangerous, which the Weasley children knew was a danger sign.

"I-I was blinded by certain issues, certain fears. I wanted to protect him." Dumbledore said weakly, the world renowned sorcerer cowering before Molly Weasley.

"PROTECT HIM!" Mrs. Weasley screeched, "You let that-that- woman torture him for a year, cut yourself off from him, then Sirius gets killed, and you ship him off to those muggles!"

"I wanted him safe." Dumbledore offered, but it did not good.

"Safe? Albus, he may be safe physically, but have you looked at him?" Lupin asked, joining Mrs. Weasley against Dumbledore. "He... he reminds me of Sirius after Azakban. He's hurting, and you have done nothing to stop that. You want him to survive Albus, and he has. You have not considered wanting him to live." Lupin said quietly, looking into Dumbledore's eyes.

"Albus, he just had the worst year of his life. His hopes and dreams for a family have been smashed, along with the only adult that was always in his corner." Lupin said, and upon Mrs. Weasley's outraged expression, he turned towards her and said calmly, "Molly, you love Harry. I know that. But you mother him far too much, which is not what he needs at this age. Also, you have your own children to look after, and you must divide your attention between them and him as

well. He needs someone backing him, not someone smothering him. Too many adults have tried to protect him, none but Sirius truly tried to support him.”

“You are correct, Remus.” Dumbledore whispered. “I only fear that I am too late to do anything about it.”

Harry sat up in his room, feeling a rage so powerful, he was half-afraid, half-elated by it. The raw fury that had been held in check for so long, the injustices Harry had put up with had all finally broken the dam of control.

That bitch... She tortured me... She almost caught Sirius... She refused to believe the facts... And worst of all... She got away. Harry thought bitterly, his rage only mounting. She deserves to die.

She did terrible things, abused her power, and yet she escaped. Just like everyone else who caused me harm. They always escape.

She doesn't have to... The voice answered seductively, sounding louder and even more enticing than before. She doesn't have to escape unscathed.

But what can I do? Harry thought, They'd never believe the word of a sixteen year old boy, especially not me.

They can't help you. And you're right, you cannot do anything. But I can.

Harry heard these words, but they barely registered in the mounting hatred that was building within him. It felt like liquid hatred was burning within his veins.

And then... nothing.

Dolores Umbridge hummed to herself in her office, pleased with the events of the day. The Potter brat had gotten himself into trouble again, and Dolores didn't even have to set it up this time. But blasted Dumbledore had to save his golden boy again... Dolores swore. If



she had it her way, Potter would have been killed long ago. It was best for the Ministry.

She continued humming as she picked up her tea, and drank it greedily, closing her eyes in happiness. A perfect ending to an excellent day.

As she closed her eyes, however, she didn't notice the all encompassing darkness that engulfed her room. No one did, except the person who casted it.

When Umbridge finally opened her eyes, she spat out the overly sugared tea she had been drinking and dropped her dainty pink cup in fright. Standing there, enshrouded in darkness, looking for all the world like a demon that had leapt from the very depths of Hell, was Harry Potter.

At least that was what Umbridge thought the apparition was. However, the soulless black eyes made him look different, giving of a twisted sort of effect, the kind of effect that his body was emitting to the area around it. He wore all black, from a large cloak that covered his entire body, with his trousers, shirt, and trainers looking the same pitch black as his eyes.

Finally, Umbridge gathered her few wits, and said in her sweetest, most condescending voice, "Mister Potter... How good that you can drop by the Ministry." She sneered at him now, and continued, "Breaking into the Under Secretary's Office will give me grounds to expel you! And this time, that fool Dumbledore can't possibly interfere."

"This would give you grounds to expel me," Harry's strange, ethereal voice said smoothly, not the least bit perturbed, "Except for one teensy little snag." He said the last three words in the same voice as Umbridge, obviously mocking her.

"I don't see a snag, Potter!" Umbridge snapped.

"Well, I do." Harry said, smirking. "You'd have to be alive to report me."

“That’s a threat Potter! I’ll have you expelled!” Umbridge crowed, going for her wand, until she found that it was gone.

“Looking for this?” This demonic looking version of Harry asked, twirling Umbridge’s wand like a baton.

“Give that back Potter! I’ll have you in Azakban for this one!” Umbridge said gleefully, glad for more evidence to support what she already knew. Potter was a menace. Which was true, but she didn’t know how much of a menace he was.

“I don’t think so.” Demon Harry smirked, “In fact, I don’t think you’re in any position to make any sort of threat against me. Not anymore. Now, it’s my turn to have a bit of fun with you.” He said fun with a strange combination of a leer and a hunger, which sent chills down Umbridge’s already frozen spine.

“Fool boy! You should know your superiors and respect them! Then again, I wouldn’t expect a no good troublemaker with no respect for authority to-“ Umbridge ranted, before her vocal cords stopped responding.

“I’ve had enough of your foolish ramblings. In fact, I’ve had all I can take from you.” This twisted version of Harry said, “You always tried to bring me under your heel, to thwart me and get me out of the way. I suffered under you. Oh yes, I suffered. But there is a saying, ‘What goes around comes around’.

“And today,” Harry smirked, his soulless black eyes radiating sadistic glee, “It comes around.” He raised his hand, and Dolores’ world changed.

Umbridge found herself sitting at her old desk at Hogwarts, holding a familiar quill. The Blood Quill.

“Recognize everything, Dolores?” Harry Potter’s mocking, ethereal voice asked from the chair in front of her.

“Potter! I’ll kil-“ As she attempt to lung towards Harry, suddenly, Umbridge’s voice disappeared again and she found herself unable to move.

“Thank Merlin. I really, really, really hate your voice. In fact,” Harry said, “I hate pretty much everything about you. But enough talk. It’s time for detention.”

Umbridge’s expression went from puzzle to horrified as her hand, all on it’s own, began writing I must not tell lies onto the parchment As always with the Blood Quill, it began slicing into her skin and wrote in her own blood.

“Look familiar?” Harry asked, before answering his own question, “Of course it does. You used it on me. I’ve decided that you should have a taste of what you’ve inflicted on me.”

Umbridge glared at him in between winces, but she couldn’t move out of the chair, held by some immense power. After an unknown amount of time, Harry snapped his fingers, struck by inspiration. “Right! We need an audience!” Harry declared.

Suddenly, the room expanded, and a large assortment of werewolves, centaurs, half-breeds of all kinds, vela, banshee, any creature subjected by the Ministry and hated by Umbridge stood there, laughing at her in their own way.

“It’s only fitting that the persecutor become the persecuted.” Harry said, laughing. The laughter was not one that warmed the heart, but one likened to a dementor’s presence, cold and taking away feeling. The laughter of a demon.

Umbridge’s hand was now bleeding profusely, the words I must not tell lies now deeply ingrained in her hand, and cutting into her veins and capillaries now. If it continued, she realized, she would die of blood loss when her hand was cut off.

“Now, I’ll give you a choice.” Harry said, his voice full of dark glee, “You can either die in two ways. I can let you die of blood loss once

those words cut your hand off,” He smirked, “Or I could leave you to the mercy of the ‘half-breeds’ that you hated and persecuted.”

Umbridge looked in terror, and tried to open her mouth, but still no sound came out.

“No?” Harry asked, “You want me to choose?” He smiled, a dark smile that promised death and suffering on those who witnessed it.

“How about...BOTH!” Harry cried out, and the half-breeds surged towards her, like a tidal wave of murderous bodies, while Umbridge could only continue her own torture by the Blood Quill.

Harry finally let her speak, if only to hear her dying screams.

Dolores Umbridge sat at her desk, screaming her head off, like an animal in its dying throes. It would have attracted several Aurors to check out exactly why the Senior Under Secretary to the Minister of Magic was screaming like that, had the smothering power of Darkness trapped the room and kept it from the outside world.

Of course, Harry, while immensely powerful, could not possibly bring that many creatures and move Umbridge and himself into Hogwarts all at once. At least not yet.

Instead, he opted for a much more delicious torture, albeit psychological. Inflicting terrible visions and adding pain into it was simple for the demon.

“Well, this has been fun, but I should get back before those idiotic Order members realize I’m missing.” Harry smirked. “But I should clean up. Goodbye Madam Umbridge.”

When Cornelius Fudge came by the next morning to talk with his Senior Under Secretary, he found no one.

Thanks to ciberloco, Kraeg001, Kathryn Black, albert87, Gyre, xRhonwynx, CharmedMilliE, Scorchy-11, SC, madskillzpro, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Maxennce, xxlostdreamrsxz, SithelfJen, jeff,

Lady of Masbolle, Tanydwr, mashimaromadness, and Ankalagon for reviewing!

## Q&A

ciberloco- That's a secret that's very close to the heart of this story.

Kraeg001- Don't worry, Reap What You Sow will still move at a good pace.

albert87- Yeah, I do.

Gyre- Well, I think you were right! But it won't be the last time.

SC- Well, not so much the anagram thing here, I was thinking something more like on Angel, with the Angelus/Angel deal. The problem is there is no word for Harry in Latin.

Maxennce- Now, that would be giving away a part of the plot...

SithelfJen- How dark eh... Well, the darker something becomes, the greater the light that casts it. (Hopes he hasn't given away too much in his little riddle).

Tanydwr- The guilt is definitely something that is important to the story (once he remembers... mwhahahaha) "Final instrument of destruction" is definitely a key saying in the story, but it is also extremely ambiguous. Not that that has any influence on the story...

AN: Well, that was deliciously evil. (How do you taste evil to know if it's delicious or not?) I hate Umbridge, and I had fun creating the different ways that they would experience Harry's wrath. If you liked that, please review!

## Chapter 3 Trial

Harry Potter awoke the next morning, feeling a strange buzz about him. It felt strange, and slightly frightening, but Harry dismissed this as a curious euphoria to having fallen asleep pissed off with everything. He looked at Ron's bed, next to him, and was surprised to find it had never been slept in.

Where in the hell did Ron sleep then? Harry asked himself, But more importantly, why didn't he sleep here?

Another voice answered him immediately. Because you were fit to kill someone last night, they thought you would need space for a bit.

He got up and changed quietly, before he remembered something that made his day a whole lot worse. I have a trial today.

The next thought brought him down even farther. I have a trial on my birthday. Just effing great.

Harry opened the door, walking wearily, not really wanting to face the day. It would only get worse from there.

When Harry got downstairs, he was immediately put on guard. First off, everyone stopped talking almost immediately. Secondly, everyone was either avoiding his gaze, something he was used to after he exploded, but some were also looking at him strangely, almost bordering on fearful.

"What's wrong?" Harry asked, crossing his arms and narrowing his eyes. "Don't say nothing. I'm a master of that excuse."

"Harry...The-" Hermione started, but was somehow unable to finish.

Uhoh. If Hermione is speechless, it can only be bad.

"What?" Harry asked again, a clearly dangerous tone in his voice now.

“Here mate.” Ron said, looking down but handing Harry the Daily Prophet.

Harry opened it to find the headline, and he stopped cold once he saw it, and could have sworn that his every mental function grinded to a screeching halt. .

Senior Under Secretary to Minister Missing!

He didn’t even bother to look at the rest of the article. Through the dark elation about Umbridge going missing, something was wrong here, Harry knew. Two people I hate do something to anger me, then I black out, then they turn up missing. Harry was terrified about what it could mean, but dismissed it and focused on something else.

“You think I did this.” Harry said, a statement and not a question.

“Well...” Hermione said, but was unable to say anything.

“Harry... It does look suspicious.” Ron stated, then realized this was the wrong thing to say as Ginny narrowed her eyes at him, Mrs. Weasley immediately began scolding him, but the most terrifying thing of all, was Harry.

He glared at Ron with a fury so terrible, the Order members present found themselves comparing it to Dumbledore in battle. “Well, thanks, mate.” Harry said sarcastically. “I’m glad you’ve grown up from fourth year.” The venom in his voice was so vehement that even Snape could not manage it.

Harry strode out of the kitchen contemptuously, thinking only one thing. This day can’t get any worse.

Of course, you should not tempt fate, especially not when your name is Harry James Potter.

Harry slammed the door hard, almost shattering the wooden frame. “That-that-that- BASTARD!” Harry roared, kicking the door, numbly thinking that he’d suffer for that later.

“How could he- Never mind that, of course he could. He’s Ron.” Harry snarled, the desire to break something only escalating. He grabbed one of his formerly prized possessions, a framed picture of himself, Ron, and Hermione at the Hogwart’s lake, sitting there, right after the events with the Philosopher’s Stone, and threw it violently against the far wall. It shattered into pieces, like the friendship it represented.

Dimly, he wondered if he would regret that as well, but didn’t care at the moment.

“Harry?”

Harry turned to see Ginny Weasley standing there, looking at him with an unreadable expression on her face.

“Shouldn’t you be hiding somewhere, lest big bad Harry Potter get you too?” Harry asked bitterly, before throwing his foot against Ron’s bed. Unfortunately, it probably did more damage to his foot than the bed.

Harry swore vehemently and violently, so much that even Ginny, who had grown up with six rowdy brothers, blushed, before she responded. “No, because I know it was not you.” Ginny said quietly, “And I know Ron knows it too.”

“Oh yes, that’s why he just leapt to my defense this morning.” He snarled, sitting himself on the bed. “This has all been a great birthday gift.”

“Harry...” Ginny said sitting herself next to him. “Ron knows he’s wrong. He just-“

“Doesn’t think before he speaks?” Harry asked dangerously.

“Yes.” Ginny said, unfazed by Harry’s anger.

“Yeah well, I’ve got an appointment with my favorite Minister, so I must get going.” Harry growled, and headed towards the door.

“Will you forgive him?” Ginny asked, but Harry didn’t answer.



Somehow, that scared Ginny more than the thought of him being responsible for Umbridge's disappearance.

A sudden knock at the door brought Ginny out her thoughts, and she knew instinctively who it was. "Ron, he's not here." She called out, and the door opened, admitting her brother.

"I really screwed things up this time, didn't I Gin?" Ron whispered.

"Yeah, you did Ron. And this time, I don't think it will be as simple getting Harry's forgiveness this time."

Harry avoided Ron and everyone else for the hour that he still had before he had to leave to go to the Ministry. Harry knew he didn't have anything to do with Umbridge. Didn't he?

He grabbed the portkey that would take him to the Ministry, noting with some pain that even Tonks and Moony wouldn't look at him.

If Harry was perfectly honest with himself, he wasn't too sure about what he did either.

Of course, it's much easier to deny and blame someone else than to face up to the truth about oneself most of the time.

So he landed in the Ministry, confused, conflicted, and totally unprepared for what was about to happen next.

Harry walked through the Ministry, and noticed even more odd looks and behavior around him. Just bloody great, Harry thought to himself bitterly. His dislike of the Ministry was slowly but surely turning into bitterness and was well not its way to hatred. A hatred that could destroy millions.

He was ushered into the courtroom quickly, although no one touched him. This time, there were quite a few people, many of them reporters. With a silent groan, Harry caught sight of Rita Skeeter. This day really, really sucks. I guess Hermione let her off the hook.

The Wizengamot, Minister Fudge, Professor Dumbledore, Amelia Bones, and the rest stood there, looking at him gravely.

Harry was placed in the usual chair, and, much to his surprise and indignation, the same chains that he saw in Dumbledore's Pensieve bind Karkaroff bound him to the chair. "What is the meaning of this!" Harry demanded, and those around him thought they heard his voice change slightly. "I thought this was a disciplinary hearing!"

"See how haughty he acts," Fudge said in a stage whisper, smirking down at him. It drove Harry's fury up several notches, and Dumbledore's attempt to silently placate him barely soothed the fury that coursed like liquid fire in his veins.

"Mister Potter, although this was originally a hearing about your violation of the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery, certain... facts and decisions have been made in the past twenty four hours." Amelia Bones said calmly, looking at him.

"In other words," Harry said bitterly, "You think I did it."

"So, are you admitting it?" Fudge asked gleefully.

"No, I am not you bumbling idiot." Harry said scathingly, "Because I didn't do it!"

Fudge seemed shocked that Harry insulted him, and titters were heard throughout the crowd. "Mister Potter!" Amelia Bone said in outrage, "The Minister is simply-

"Being an idiot, a hindrance to the war against Voldemort," Harry glared at those who flinched, "Or merely being the most pathetic excuse for a Minister in possibly our entire history. Of course, I haven't studied all the failures in the Minister's office, so I could be wrong." Harry said these words with venom that could have killed if it wasn't mere words.

The crowd seemed shocked by Harry's anger, and he took that moment to vent more of his fury on the crowd. "Of course, you can't

have an idiotic leader without idiots who follow him like blind sheep to the slaughter.” Harry snarled, glaring at the entire crowd, “You were all so eager to believe I was crazy and Dumbledore senile simply because it was better than facing up to the truth! That Voldemort is back!”

Someone spoke up within the crowd fearfully, “Don’t say his name!” He looked around wildly, as if Voldemort himself would appear in the Ministry again.

Harry glared at him with the fully fury of his dark rage, and the man almost fainted on the spot. “Why? Because you’re all too cowardly to say it? Is that it? Or will he suddenly appear because I say his name? Well, let’s find out. Voldemort. Voldemort. Voldemort! Voldemort!” Harry said mockingly, still glaring at the man, “See. Nothing to be afraid of. It’s just a name.”

“Mister Potter, that is enough!” Madam Bones shouted, banging her gavel loudly to drown out the uproar that followed Harry’s tirade. “We have no time for these trivialities and accusations! You are on trial here!”

“Right... And you don’t want to hear about these failings because?” Harry asked, smirking at the Wizengamot.

“Enough! Harry, please! Restrain yourself!” Dumbledore urged, and Harry glared at him too. He felt a small tug on his mental shields, and Harry threw everything he had at Dumbledore, with a look in his eyes of satisfaction as Dumbledore fell into his chair, gasping slightly.

“Mister Potter! Stop this at once!” Madam Bones shouted, glaring at Harry, who merely glared back with greater force.

“Very well. But only because I want to be done here.” Harry said, with enough disdain in his voice that he figured even Fudge could discern, “So let’s stop wasting my time.”

The Wizengamot seemed again shocked by his attitude, and he smirked at them, challenging them. Fudge took up the challenge foolishly. It would be like a squib challenging Voldemort to a duel.

"If we are done listening to the ravings and rants of a clearly unbalanced young man," Fudge said condescendingly, looking around, "Then I would like to begin the interrogation."

"May I ask exactly why I, of all people, am being accused of this?" Harry asked, his voice on the line between sarcasm and scathing.

"Because Madam Umbridge, during her stay at Hogwarts, reported your undeserved animosity towards her, a woman who merely wished to help your education," Fudge said in an oily tone.

"Oh yes, I'm sure plenty of people learned from that bitch." Harry snarled, and several people gasped in surprise, but not the Order.

"Mister Potter!" Someone in the Wizengamot said in outrage.

"Well, it's true, isn't it? I don't think there were many high scores on the O.W.L's or the N.E.W.T.'s." Harry said scathingly.

"Nonsense! Some of the highest grades in DADA, including one that is the highest in Hogwarts' history were on these tests!" Fudge declared, but Harry cut him off with a glare so deadly, it would have killed a Basilisk in a staring match.

"I bet I can name exactly who got those scores." Harry countered calmly, "And I'm willing to bet that the rest of the scores are among the lowest."

"And how would you know that?" A woman Harry recognized as Professor Tofty asked in a combination of genuine curiosity and suspicion.

"Because I taught those who had the high scores, probably everyone who passed the Defense Against the Dark Arts O.W.L's, and Umbridge never taught us. You'd have gotten the same results if someone merely read from the book the to class every day. Wait a minute, that pretty much sums up that class!" Harry said sarcastically.

"You taught them?" One person asked incredulously.

“Of course I did. I founded and taught the group that got those scores, and it paid off when myself and five others within the group encountered Death Eaters and Voldemort himself in this very Ministry!” Harry shouted, almost getting up out of the chair, the chains being the only thing that bound him.

“What Mister Potter fails to mention is that this group is illegal.” Fudge countered smoothly through the uproar that followed Harry’s proclamation. “And Madam Umbridge was a perfectly competent teacher.”

“Well, competent compared to you, Fudge.” Harry cut in scathingly, “But the two of you must have really gotten along. In fact, you two should be part of Voldemort’s little ‘Make Harry Potter’s life a living hell’ club. You’ve been doing a bang up job so far, and Umbridge has done even more.”

“Mister Potter! Both Minister Fudge and the late Madam Umbridge were merely upholding the law and-“ Amelia Bones started, but Harry cut in, seeing his chance to finally do some damage.

“If by upholding the law means that Madam Umbridge was allowed to set Dementors on me last year, use a quill that cuts into my bloody hand, and try to use a Cruciatus Curse on me to get me to talk about private matters, then yes, she was.” Harry said this with such force and venom that not even Madam Bones’ gavel could calm the crowd down. Dumbledore looked at Harry as if to say You didn’t have to do that.

Harry resisted the urge to give the old man the finger and tell him to sod off.

“See! Hear his outrageous claims! Madam Umbridge would never do such a thing!” Fudge declared, and many seemed to agree.

“Order! Order! ORDER!” Madam Bones nearly screamed, and the courtroom finally quieted down, but some still looked restless.

"Mister Potter, I trust you have proof of these clearly outrageous claims!" Madam Bones shouted.

"You can use Veritaserum or a Pensieve. I'd prefer the Pensieve to go along with it though. Any chance of banishing that ugly bitches' face from my memory is a gift." Harry drawled, and again, the courtroom seemed to fall into chaos.

Harry found a certain amount of dark pleasure in this, and in the back of his mind, something promised there would be much more to come. Much more.

After a moment, Harry told Madam Bones it was best to view the Cruciatus memory in a Pensieve, rather than from word of mouth. But, he added, perhaps to cause another reaction or perhaps because he really wanted it, they could take away all his memories of Umbridge.

The Wizengamot decided, (much to Fudge's displeasure and outrage), to view the memory on a rare large Pensieve projector and to hear the rest from Harry's mouth afterward with Veritaserum.

So, Harry quickly followed the procedure and dropped the memory into the Pensieve.

The courtroom watched as Umbridge began with the idea of using Veritaserum on Harry. As they watched the point where Umbridge demanded Snape hand over Veritaserum, Madam Bones stated in horror, "That's a regulated potion that is only to be used with proper Ministry approval. We never gave her that."

"Though you would have if she asked." Harry muttered to himself.

They passed it after that (Harry was thankful only Order members knew what he was talking about back in there), and watched in horrified fascination as Umbridge began convincing herself to use the Cruciatus Curse and her confession about . It cut away as Hermione gave in. Harry let out a breath he didn't know he had been holding. He'd rather not have the next few minutes shown to the full Wizengamot and the media.

The entire courtroom was silenced, as if someone had used a Silencing Charm. Finally, Dumbledore, looking more aged and weary than ever before, stated, "We will now proceed with the Veritaserum interrogation. Madam Bones?" He asked, looking at the shocked Head of Magical Law Enforcement.

She shook herself from her shock and nodded shakily, and called in the potions master of the courtroom. It was a proud looking brown haired woman who stepped forward as the potions master, and handed Madam Bones the Veritaserum. As she neared him, Harry was struck with a thought. "Wait... How do I know that's not poison or something else." Harry said suspiciously.

From the back, he thought he heard a growl of approval from Moody before another uproar was heard. "Mister Potter!" Madam Bones stated, the familiar look of outrage on her face, "This is a Ministry Employee!"

"Oh, and wasn't Umbridge one as well? Didn't she try to use a Cruciatus Curse on me and sic some Dementors too?" Harry asked sarcastically, and Madam Bones looked affronted, as well as the woman who handed her the potion.

"Very well, Mister Potter. We will test it." Dumbledore stated, and summoned the Veritaserum to him. He quickly muttered a powerful Revealing Charm that showed it was in fact, Veritaserum. "Is that enough proof Harry?" He asked the Boy-Who-Lived, who nodded slightly.

Madam Bones quickly put the three drops down his throat, and Harry swallowed them. Before the pacifying feeling overtook his mind, he thought to himself, Payback time.

As Harry's emerald green eyes glazed over and he went slack, Madam Bones pulled his head up slowly, looking into them. "He is under the effects." She stated.

"How do we know that?" Fudge sneered, but he was truly scared. That memory of Potter's had not gone well for him at all.

“Minister Fudge!” Madam Bones stated, whirling on him, “I am the Head of Magical Law Enforcement! I know when someone is under Veritaserum!”

Fudge looked affronted, and tried to babble an excuse but no one listened.

“Now, Mister Potter. Did Madam Umbridge use a Blood Quill on you?” Madam Bones asked, knowing that from Harry’s description, that was probably accurate. Fudge tried to squeak out an excuse, but once again, he was ignored.

“I don’t know what that is.” Harry stated.

“Did it cut into your hand and write in your blood, and leave a scar on it?” Madam Bones asked again.

“Yes. It’s on my hand.” Harry stated, and his hand rose and showed the faint but visible I must not tell lies to her. Madam Bones gasped in horror.

“I see.” She whispered. “Then there are no further questions.” She said the next part louder, and turned to leave and get the antidote when Fudge spoke up.

“I have one! Did you have anything to do with Madam Umbridge’s disappearance Mister Potter?”

Dead silence. Most people were either looking at Fudge or at Harry. They looked at Fudge with absolute shock, and some knew that this was his last grasp at straws. Others looked at Harry eagerly, wanting the truth. Rita Skeeter in particular was hungry for a new juicy story to write. Not one person even dared to breathe as Harry’s mouth opened to respond.

“No.”

Thanks to gabbywolf, Treck, Marc Jason Ng, the1truegoddess, Bukuma, Szihuoko, LimaBean0501, BalrogMan65, Zeromaru: Chaos



Mode, Mystic Archangel, moniqueagain, Adrelliehs, Emma Barrows, Freya4, lonelyslytherinslowlydying, kitkat, L.T., Lady of Masbolle, Dirbatua, Hunter101, snitch, nesy-poo-2008, Samurai Demon -God Sekikage, Arsenal, FroBoy, mashimaromadness, Kathryn Black, Tanydwr, harrysmom, ShyDayDreamer, Maxennce, totallystellar, do-not-mess-with-me, SanityEscapesMe, and phoenix catcher for reviewing!

Q&A

Treck- As stated above, that was a mistake. It's fixed now!

Marc Jason Ng- More gruesome?! Wow. Well, I figured that was pretty painful as it was. But it's not the most painful death in the story, not even close.

the1truegoddess- Sorry bout that. No, I did not.

BalrogMan65- Sweet! Balrog's are awesome! Do I get an army of em? Or do I become one? Either way, thanks for the council seat!

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- Harry for the next Dark Lord. Pah! Dark Lord's are sissies. You'll never find a mere Dark Lord Harry with me. More like a Dark GOD! You know, you could also translate Voldemort into "Wish of Death". (Flight and Wish are eerily similar) Yeah, I'm having trouble with Harry's new name. As you can plainly see at the top. Dude, you picture Death as a hot girl too? And I don't think J.K. meant "Eaters of Death" like that, you sicko! Lol.

Adrelliehs- Yeah, it's definitely Yami inspired. But Dark Harry is no guardian spirit, nor a mere dark side. He is much more!!! MWHHAHAHAHAHA!!! Ahem... yes...nothing to see here folks...

Emma Barrows- I'm not normally a fan of H/Hr, in fact, I'm pretty much against it. But your story does have promise!

kitkat- Yeah! H/G Rules! The romance is a bit less than my other stories (evidenced by the lack of Romance in the Genres), but the H/G ship will be there!

Hunter101- Yeah. Most stories simply have him get angry, then start killing people. That's not Harry, no matter how angry he is. However, this Harry...

Samurai Demon -God Sekikage- Yeah, demons aren't necessarily evil (I'm following the Buffy kind of demon), and yes, I know that they are prone to get bloodlust. Your theory is well rounded and exceptionally good, so we'll have to see. Now, another of my stories has a real Demon Harry (yes, I know, I'm teasing), who is going to be fun to write.

Arsenal- I'm glad you think so. Dark Harry fics are mostly just Harry being angry, and irrationally going over to Voldemort or doing something equally crazy. I was shooting for something more in character.

mashimaromadness- Man, people really like it when Harry reams out Dumbledore. There won't be any more Umbridge, but there are plenty of other targets...

Tanydwr- Man, you are really polite then. (Or it could just be the school environment I hang out in. All guysstrange to downright disturbing conversations loaded with much worse) Voldemort's death... That is one of the deaths I've already pre-planned. Cause as we all know, he's gotta die.

Maxennce- Dark Harry's fighting back alright, and the look on everyone's faces when they realize this is going to be fun.

do-not-mess-with-me- I have a warped sense of humor too! How else can I keep coming up with inventive ways of death? I'm glad you liked the way Umbridge went down. I try to be original. No mere Avada Kedavra or death by Cruciatus (is that possible?) for anyone here.

SanityEscapesMe- Ginny? Evil? Perish the thought! Ginny can't be evil! Will 'Harry' get his revenge on everyone? Why- (Loud thunder crash, bangs, explosions) And that's what will happen. Will he hurt his friends and Dumbledore? Well- (More thunder) See, I can answer your questions.

AN: Well, I think we all know whose going to die next! If not, then it will become clear soon enough. I'm so mean to Harry, aren't I? Remember to send up your thoughts on Dark Harry's name. Really, please do! I also have a question for all of you. What's cooler? A thief Harry, or non-thief, much happier and social Harry? Anyways, thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 4 Death to Fools

Harry didn't remember much, but he remembered everything that happened while he was under the Veritaserum. The anger, the outrage that coursed through his veins as Fudge asked the question everyone wanted to ask, but no one dared to say out loud and fully.

He remembered only feeling a numbing hatred that coursed through his veins as he was escorted from the courtroom, only barely aware that Dumbledore had looked at him strangely before he left, as did some others as well. He heard several apologies from the crowd, but Harry ignored it, feeling only the liquid hatred that replaced his blood pumping through every part of his body.

He barely remembered grasping the Portkey that took him back to the worst possible place he wished to be at the moment. Number 12 Grimmauld Place.

As Harry struggled to regain his bearings, he was ushered in yet again, straight into the house and immediately bombarded by Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and the rest of the Weasleys.

Harry quickly stormed up to his room, brushing past them without even a hello, only a "Stay away from me. I want to be alone."

They all stood there in shock for a moment before George finally spoke up. "That bad eh?" He stated jovially, but no one laughed.

"What happened in there?" Ginny asked softly, wanting to know what had angered Harry so much.

"The Ministry thought Harry did it too." Remus said in an equally soft voice. "But he didn't. Fudge asked him under Veritaserum."

"What was he doing under Veritaserum!" Hermione screeched, her sisterly/motherly concern for Harry on full blast with the damage done to his mind, body, and very soul over the past years.

“He told them all about what Umbridge did to him. The Dementors, the Blood Quill, and almost using the Cruciatus.” Remus said softly.

Ron pumped his fist into the air and let out a whoop, before realizing that this was probably not the best time to celebrate with an angry Harry stewing upstairs.

“We should let him be for a moment. He must be thoroughly drained from his day in court.” Mrs. Weasley said softly, ushering everyone into the kitchen.

Ginny took one last glance towards the stairs where Harry had ascended moments before, and whispered a soft, “You didn’t deserve that.”

It was dinner by the time Harry came down, the demands of his stomach overpowering his rage. He had stormed and brooded, but he also had to fight this strange dark feeling inside of him. It scared him, that feeling. He had felt it twice before, and both times, someone he hated disappeared.

He strode down, and, before he could sit down and eat, Professor Dumbledore appeared at the bottom of the stairs. Harry, not willing to show his shock, stated calmly, if extremely rudely, “What?”

If Dumbledore was thrown by Harry’s rudeness, it didn’t show. “That might not have been the best course of action now, Harry.” Dumbledore said sternly, “Cornelius, while a fool, is cooperating with us now. You have destabilized him.”

“And helping overthrow an incompetent Minister who rules like a dictator is bad because...” Harry drawled, feeling his just subsided rage beginning to spark new life.

“It is better to have the Minister we know and have now, then to have the chaos of an election and the process of getting him out of office.” Dumbledore countered.

“The devil you know...” Harry muttered, remembering the muggle phrase.

“Although not the terms I had in mind, yes.” Dumbledore said, a small twinkle in his eye. It disappeared after a moment.

“Wait. So, because you don’t want to have the trouble of undermining him and replacing him, you’ll keep him in office!” Harry shouted, and it brought several people from the kitchen to peer cautiously at the Boy-Who-Lived and the Headmaster of Hogwarts. “We have to fight alongside an idiot Ministry whose leader will probably be bought onto Voldemort’s side!”

“Harry, Cornelius is not a fool.” Dumbledore said, looking at Harry over his half-moon glasses. “He would not turn to Voldemort.”

Harry snorted. “Could have fooled me.”

“Harry!” Dumbledore said sharply, and everyone, even Harry was surprised. “I know you are angry. At Corenlius, Umbridge,” He paused here, as if it was painful to say, “and myself. But you can’t let that blind you! There is a much larger picture that we must work for!”

“That larger picture crap again!” Harry swore, and stepped close to the Headmaster, fiery green meeting cold blue. “That’s always your excuse! Leaving me to be abused by my relatives was part of that bigger picture too, huh? Wait a second, I know of someone else who was once in my position, who loved Hogwarts and hated the place that you forced him to call home!” Harry snarled, and everyone looked confused, save Ginny, whose eyes widened in horror and recognition, “So tell me, Dumbledore. Am I some kind of experiment to see if those circumstances would create another VOLDEMORT!”

Everyone jumped in fear and surprise at Harry’s tone, and they turned towards Albus Dumbledore, as always, for insight. But Dumbledore looked weary and old, as if Harry’s words were destroying his youthful attitude. “TELL ME!”

“You were not an experiment Harry. It could not have been that bad, Harry. And I had nothing to do with Tom Riddle’s summer stays at the orphanage.” Dumbledore said quietly, looking down.

“Not. That. Bad?” Harry asked incredulously, “You never once checked up on me did you! You didn’t know! Or you didn’t care!”

Dumbledore seemed to shrink further, and could only manage a small, “I do care. I told you that.”

“If you cared,” Harry snarled, “You would have saved me from my tormentors, my jailers. My... relatives.” Harry said the last word with immense hatred, and glared at Dumbledore.

“You always let people hurt me, claiming that you were keeping me alive.” Harry whispered, and that seemed to be worse than his raging and storming. “You only wanted me alive to do the job I was born to do. Nothing more. You wanted your weapon safe so that it could end this war!” Harry’s whisper picked up to a low snarl towards the end.

“I seem to have lost my appetite, Mrs. Weasley,” Harry said quietly, still looking at the Headmaster with a deadly glare, “I think I’m going to rest.”

With that, he stormed upstairs, leaving a shocked and horrified audience.

Not once did anyone notice the once still and clear summer sky grow dark, as if a storm was brewing.

Harry raged and stormed upstairs, echoing the now rising storm outside that seemed to grow with his anger, which in turn angered Harry for some reason in a vicious cycle. “Bloody Dumbledore! Bloody Fudge! BLOODY PROPHECY!” Harry roared throwing a chair against the wall, smashing the wooden chair and cracking the wall. It did nothing to slow Harry’s rage down. If anything, it fueled it.

“I hate them! Dumbledore! Fudge!” Harry roared, kicking the wall with all his might as his vision began darkening with his mood.

“Dumbledore lets everyone take a swing at me except Voldemort.” Harry muttered angrily. “He’s always controlling, manipulating, never seeing anyone as a real person.”

Harry didn't want complete freedom, or repayment or recompense from Dumbledore. Maybe not even an apology for all the years with the Dursleys.

All he wanted to do was have something go his way for once...

"I hope Fudge disappears, just like Umbridge." Harry snarled, his vision fully blinded by darkness...

Very well then. Let's get to it.

Cornelius Fudge sat in his bedroom, pacing angrily. He had sent away his house-elf and his aides, his fury at Potter's actions today echoing, albeit unknowingly, Potter's fury at him.

But he was also scared. Scared about the visage that he saw as he left the courtroom, when he traded glares with Harry Potter. His eyes were black, soullessly, uncaring to the point of apathy, but nonetheless, there was a danger, a malice, an evil that lay hidden, just beneath the surface of those black eyes that spoke of infinite power and the desire to use it. In that split second, Potter looked like the Devil Fudge had heard about from one of the muggle born aides. A terrible demon. And that single visage also seemed to give him a message.

You'll pay for this.

Cornelius Fudge was scared and furious. But more scared than furious. And of course, a storm had to brew on this day, reflecting his somber and angry mood. He had been made a fool of, had his reputation destroyed and his credibility and support nearly completely destroyed. It didn't help that one of his main backers, Lucius Malfoy, was both a Death Eater and absent.

The thunder flashed, and Fudge could have sworn he saw something in the corner. He grabbed his wand and called out, "Lumos! Show yourself!"



But, much to his relief, there was nothing. He turned away, but as he did, the thunder blasted again and, once more, the shape appeared.

Fudge, panicked and emotionally wrecked, fired a Stunner into the shadows. But again, there was nothing. "Get a grip on yourself Cornelius, there's nothing there. You're as paranoid as that fool Mad-Eye." The Minister muttered under his breath, and turned away, determined to sleep. He climbed into bed, and tried to sleep.

Again, thunder flashed, but he ignored it. But he couldn't ignore what happened next. "Fudgy!" A voice whispered, a dark, ethereal voice.

"What! Whose there? I'm warning you! I am the Minister of Magic!" Fudge sputtered, sitting up and looking around wildly.

"You know me, Fudgy." The voice answered softly. "And I know quite well all your titles. Not that it does you any good when I devour your soul."

Fudge could feel his bladder threatening to expose just how cowardly he truly was as he grabbed his wand and wildly cried out "Stupefy!"

The jet of red light struck the wall, but this time, the shadows were not fully dispelled, only slightly illuminated, like when the thunder flashed. But it revealed someone. Harry Potter.

Or at least, someone who looked impossibly similar to Harry Potter. The Minister of Magic flashed back to the visage he passed off as a mirage in the courtroom, a figment of his imagination born from the stress of the day. Harry, or whatever it was, was dressed in all black. Although Fudge didn't know it, it was the same clothing that the demon had worn when he killed Umbridge.

"Potter! What are you doing here!" Cornelius Fudge sputtered, training his wand shakily at him. Although the Minister had been in the Magical Law Enforcement Department for quite some time, it had been a while since he had been in battle. He had never been that great in combat anyway.

“Oh, I was just out for a walk, and decided to drop in.” Harry smiled cheerfully, his tone echoing his smile, both with a hint of darkness in them. “I was just thinking how much I’d like to torture you, and well, here I am!”

Fudge nearly dropped his wand in shock. “Stupefy!” He cried out.

The jet of red light flew true, and struck the demon head on with a Stunning Spell. It probably would have been better to throw the pillow behind him. That might have at least made him feel something.

“Was that supposed to hurt?” Harry asked the stunned Minister, who was shaking in fright. “I’m sorry. Ouch!” Harry said dramatically, clutching his chest. “There, is that better?” Harry asked again.

The Minister dropped his wand, truly terrified of the demon now, as evidenced by the warmth spreading throughout his nether regions, accompanied by an uncomfortable wetness. He rushed towards the demon and grabbed the black cloak, kissing it and saying pitifully, “Please don’t kill me. Please don’t kill me. I’ll give you money! Power! My own office! Just please don’t kill me.”

“Money?” Harry asked, his black eyes glinting oddly, and Fudge seemed to take this as a good sign.

“And power too! And I’ll make you the youngest Minister in the history of the Wizarding World! Together we can-“ Fudge said excitedly, till his voice stopped working entirely.

“The Together We Can Rule the World speech, Fudgy?” Harry asked disdainfully, using the pet name he had for the Minister. “I don’t need money or your pathetic office. I can get far more power on my own, and more power from your death. But don’t worry, we’ll torture first.”

The demon raised his wand, and Cornelius Fudge’s world changed.

The Minister of Magic found himself standing in one of the worst looking alleys he had ever seen, worse than the ones he trudged through as a Junior Law Enforcement officer. He hated those days.

He would rather have been in a different Department, but back then that had been the fast track to better things. If you were smart or lucky enough to survive it.

Then he noticed his clothing. Where he had worn a top of the line, fashionable, and of course, expensive pajamas to bed, he had none of that now. All he had were the dirtiest looking rags he had seen, even worse than the ones in Azkaban. They barely covered his crotch and only patches of his skin. These smelled and looked as though they had been rubbed into all sorts of human feces, urine, and waste. Fudge threw up, the smell choking his nostrils and even his tongue. He tried to find his wand, but found it missing as well.

“Potter! Where are you!” Fudge screamed in fear and outrage.

“Sheesh, not so loud Fudgy. I’m here.” Harry said suddenly, and the Minister jumped in fright as the demon appeared to have been standing next to him all along.

“What have you done to me!” Fudge demanded harshly, his outrage blinding him to the fact that he lacked a wand.

“Well, not much.” Harry said as he bent down, looking into the Minister’s eyes with his soullessly black ones, before grinning. “At least not yet.”

Then, visions began passing through Cornelius Fudge’s eyes. Visions of himself, but not acting as himself, as the pompous and self-important Minister of Magic. A vision of himself being mugged and doing nothing about it. A vision of begging for food from total strangers, on his knees and sobbing pitifully, with strangers looking at him with a mixture of pity and contempt. A vision of powerlessness as others took the scraps of food he begged from other people. A vision of helplessness as he held himself and his rags close to him for warmth, watching those rags get stolen from him and not doing anything, not having the power to. Visions of his greatest fear. The loss of power and influence, where his money and all his accomplishments amounted to nothing more than the stained and feces covered rags he wore.

Harry smiled as the Minister lay writhing at the foot of his own bed, crying and sobbing. It was a dark smile, the smile of cruelty and the pleasure that one got from it. The dark rush filled his veins and sang from his every pore, demanding more suffering. A demand the demon was glad to sate as he relentlessly threw vision after vision at the Minister.

Like Umbridge, these incredibly real visions had destroyed the once proud Minister, reducing him to the quivering, sobbing mess barely laying before him. A sight that sated the dark hunger within the demon, at least for now.

What a pity I could not do this to Bellatrix. I wish I could have held her under that spell for longer. The demon thought wistfully. Ah well. Maybe when I find Tom I can add her punishment to his.

Finally, he released Cornelius Fudge from the torture, smiling at how pathetic the pompous man looked. "That'll do it." The demon whispered softly.

I hunger, and there is a perfectly cooked meal in front of me.

Fudge was allowed one last scream. The scream of the damned in their final torture.

Thanks to Minority, Treck, BalrogMan65, Tanydwr, CharmedMilliE, Trunks2598, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Maxennce, Gyre, Szihuoko, Kathyrn Black, Shea Loner, Samurai Demon-God Sekikage, kungzoune, totallystellar, Gaps, mauraderox, YamiRose: Dark ElementalGoddess, jbfritz, Wren Truesong, Lady of Masbolle, Dirbatua, spike, Harrie, OrionTheHunter, mashimaromadness, Gohan00, harrysmom, jpthug12, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, and Silver-Entrantress-Elf for reviewing!

Q&A

Minority- Wow, I didn't know I was that good. I hoped you liked more of Pissed Off!Harry.

BalrogMan65- I'll do that. Btw, my e-mail address is yamipaladinofchaos at sbcglobal dot net

Tanydwr-Ah, the joys of being the rarely cursing person. Its always funny when people like that , I figured some people would get the idea, that Harry/Dark Harry (Ultio is actually quite nice) are separate. Yeah, people don't get that Angel/Angelus are different. Soul, no soul. Good but confused/Evil Genius.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- You've met Death? Nice. I think I might have, but I was passed out. Yeah, Dark Harry's name just has to be perfect, something that makes absolute sense, yet ties him to Harry. None of the fancy ways to say Harry make sense.

Maxennce- I'm glad you enjoyed the reaming of the wizarding world. Can I promise you more? Well, maybe...

Gyre- Actually, I have reasons for that.

Szihuoko- Merging with his Dark Side? What a preposterous thought...

Samurai Demon-God Sekikage- Well, I know that you've (however unintentionally) have voted for the next fic I produce. Harry can already talk to his dark side, if you've noticed, but he isn't aware of what that voice really is. Will he later? Why- (Loud bang). Demon Harry lusting after mortal women... Be funny, perhaps, but not in his character. Want, take, have. The motto of evil.

Gaps- Torture Ron? I do get annoyed with the little bugger sometimes.

Wren Truesong- First off, let me say, thanks and wow. Thanks for actually looking through my AN, and wow for your response. You know, I did a research paper ( to those who don't know what it is, think an essay, only monster sized) on both Henry IV and Henry V, both of which involve Prince Hal/Henry V. I might have glazed over that line where he calls himself "Henry le Roy". But you know, the idea has merits. Henry sounds cool too, especially considering the German translation. Cruciatus Curse causing a heart attack? Well, if

it can cause brain damage, anything's possible. I'm glad you enjoyed Umbridge's (Umbitch's) death. The AU I am considering, it's a bit more serious and plot oriented than any other fic I've thought up. Thief vs Friendly Harry is a tough call, but I think I'll go with thief, personally. (I could make him a kleptomaniac!)

Lady of Masbolle- Harry could be a thief, if put into the right context. A canon Harry would not be a thief, but if you tweaked the canon... Which question took your breath away? Dark Harry is an interesting theme. I personally don't like it as much, but my version is fun, and still has a Light Harry.

mashimaromadness- First off, he enjoys torture. That's not exactly the most wholesome pastime. To the second part of your review. Well, who says that the Dark thing isn't Harry... Mwhahahahaha.

harrysmom- How deep can someone go? He's Harry, just a dark, twisted reflection of himself, the dark side of his soul. The AU story is very different, but still links with the first 5 HP books. You'll find out why, hopefully soon, considering there are plenty of votes for the AU.

arekuruu-inabikari-no-She- I play Warcraft! I know who Arthas is, silly. Actually, I kind of see a similarity (both of were good in the beginning, and-cuts off) Whoops, almost let something slip. (This constant teasing is annoying, isn't it?) Actually, thieves don't have to be evil, they just steal stuff. That doesn't make them evil.

AN: I like Dumbledore. Got that. That hasn't changed. This is just how Harry has to be right now. If you have a problem with how he is now, then you won't like Book Six, considering that with J.K.'s style, he'll be doing a lot of it. Anyways, it's only temporary. It will change soon. If you enjoy it, enjoy it! Lastly, you might notice the changing of Dark Harry's style/behavior. That's something I can't answer why, but I can tell you that it isn't sudden, or unplanned. It's very much a part of the story. Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 5 Love or Death

The next morning, Harry felt extremely drained and strange, as if it had taken him all his might to rouse from sleep. Like something last night had taken his strength.

Like yesterday, Ron was not in the room, obviously still spooked and ashamed of his actions the previous day. "Like he should be." Harry snarled, getting up to change. He had missed dinner last night. In fact... Harry thought to himself, My whole nights a blur after I yelled at Dumbledore...

Harry shrugged it off as an aftereffect of being so tired and pissed off at the same time. Which would cost more lives in the long run. Or at least souls.

When Harry trudged down to breakfast, again, the same thing happened. Everyone stopped they're loud discussions. "Déjà vu." Harry muttered, before calling out, "What is it now? Who died?"

When no one answered, no one even dared look at him for fear of his rage being loosed on him or her, but it only added fuel to his ire. "What happened?" Harry asked, his voice low and so dangerous that even Voldemort would have had to double take.

"Here Harry." Ginny said, seemingly the only one not affected, or least affected by the threat of his rage or whatever they had been talking about. Harry gave a nod and a grateful look at Ginny before looking at the news and grabbing the cup of tea Mrs. Weasley left next to him before she hurried away. He took a long sip and opened his eyes sleepily, the warm drink in his mouth awakening his sleeping body.

What he saw forced him to spit out the drink all over the front page of the Daily Prophet.

"Of you must be joking! Didn't I just go through a trial yesterday people! How could I possibly get the Minister in his own home! I don't even know where that is!" Harry roared, throwing the teacup against

the wall. It shattered, but Harry didn't care. He hadn't broken enough stuff last night as it was.

"We never-" Ron started, but the glare Harry sent him was so poisonous that it forced Ron's vocal cords into temporary paralysis, as if a serpent had bit them.

"You know you were thinking it. Why the bloody hell else would you all be so bloody uncomfortable!" Harry roared, his full fury loosed onto Ron, Hermione, Mrs. Weasley, Remus, Tonks, and the twins as he glared at them. "I can't believe you people!"

He turned on his heel, muttering under his breath, " Well, I'm definitely not eating today."

As Harry stewed in his room, angry, bitter, and generally ready to bite whoever's head happened to pop through the door when a knock was heard.

"What?" Harry snarled, his voice dark and dangerous and threatening.

"I've got some breakfast for you Harry. I figured you'd be hungry." Ginny answered, and, much to Harry's surprise, opened the door while holding a tray, and entered without hesitation, seemingly unaffected by Harry's recent habit of reaming out whoever decided to piss him off. She set the tray down in front of Harry, on his bed.

"Thanks." Harry said hoarsely, before attacking the food like a half-starved man. Which wasn't far from the truth, having skipped all of the meals yesterday. Reaming people out and making embarrassments out of others really took it out of a guy.

Ginny giggled at the gusto at which he devoured the hearty breakfast she set up for him.

"Thanks Gin." Harry said, wiping his mouth clean of the last of the food with a napkin.



"No problem Harry. Mum told me to bring this up anyway, and-" Ginny began explaining, but Harry cut her off.

"Not that. Thanks for not being scared. For not backing down." Harry said, looking into her chocolate brown eyes with his emerald green eyes that held so much pain and hurt.

"No problem Harry. Don't mind them. They're just really freaked out. They know you would never do something like that." Ginny said, smiling at him.

Harry smiled back, and said, "Not just now. But yesterday, and all of last year. You pulled me out of my funk better than anyone, even Hermione and... Ron." Harry said the last bit hesitantly and nearly choked on the word.

Ginny seemed taken aback, before saying quietly, "I'll always be there to help you out Harry."

"Why?" Harry asked, looking into her eyes again with pleading and confusion. "Ron and Hermione, we were friends for five years. But you have no obligation."

Ginny winced at the past tense Harry used about his friends, but answered, "Yes I do. Harry," She whispered, grasping his hands and looking into his eyes, "I owe you a life debt. But even if I didn't, you're my friend. You mean a lot to this family, and to-to me." She almost choked on the last bit, blushing, but Harry didn't mind nor notice.

"Thanks Ginny." Harry whispered, and then he did something he had never done before. He hugged her. He gave someone a hug for the first time in his life, hugging her fiercely and pouring his thanks, his gratitude to the diminutive redhead who was brave enough to stand up to him, to be there for him.

"Um... Harry..." Ginny whispered, blushing fiercely. This isn't right! I'm over him! I have a boyfriend! Does Dean ring a bell! Ginny thought to herself. She was in a very bad position for a girl with a boyfriend she liked and wanted to know better, being held by her crush and a boy she once believed she loved.

Suddenly, Harry realized what he was doing and let go immediately, scrambling to the other side of the bed and blushing just as fiercely as Ginny. "Sorry... I was just... really grateful." Harry whispered, smiling shyly.

Despite her will not to, Ginny blushed and smiled at him. "Don't be sorry. I understand. It's a friend thing, or something one of my brothers would do." Well, maybe not Ron or the twins.

"Of course." Harry said quietly, but for some reason, he didn't want Ginny to think he hugged her as a friend or brother...

Harry was shaken by his thoughts as Ginny sat upright. "Oh! I almost forgot! Your O.W.L. results came in yesterday! We forgot!" She exclaimed, "All that stuff about your trial and the attack." She grabbed a letter that had been in her pocket, and handed it to him, smiling.

Harry gulped. He wanted to look at his O.W.L. results, but on the other hand, with the way his week had been going, it might be terrible. Eventually, screwing up his nerve, he took it slowly, carefully from Ginny, ignoring the small shock he got from when he brushed against her hand.

Ginny got up, hoping she wasn't moving too quickly as she left the room. But she couldn't help the small smile that graced her face.

Harry found himself feeling much better after talking with Ginny, and decided that he would be as good a friend to Ginny as she had been to him. Also, if he was going to survive Grimmauld Place, having a friend was much better, and, seeing as how he and Ron and Hermione were no longer speaking, he needed a friend. And he wanted to make up for all the times he ignored Ginny Weasley.

That could take a while, but Harry was willing to do it. Something told him he had another reason, but he figured it was his imagination. Just like that dark voice. I mean, everyone has one of those, right?

Sure they do, another voice answered cynically. Remember? Hearing voices isn't good, even in the Wizarding world.

A week later, Harry's gloom had subsided somewhat, mostly thanks to the youngest Weasley. Harry wondered exactly how he had ever gotten along without her, the perfect combination between Ron's temper, the twin's mischievous nature, and her mother's caring nature, all wrapped into one Weasley. She was the best of each Weasley, and the best of them all, in Harry's opinion.

He and Ginny had grown a lot closer, and apart from that one scene a week ago, Harry hadn't had any fits of emotion or uncomfortable silences with her.

The two of them had pranked Ron, testing out the twin's new merchandise as a plus, did homework together, and generally did what the Trio used to do, before the... unpleasantness.

As Harry mused about the youngest Weasley, the subject of his thoughts burst through the door.

"What's up Ginny?" Harry asked, noticing how excited Ginny looked, how her shirt seemed to cling to her as she breathed, how-

"We're going to go to Diagon Alley today!" Ginny said excitedly, breaking Harry's uncomfortable train of thoughts, "To make up for that trial on your birthday. Some gift that was."

"Right..." Harry said, but he had another thought before the thoughts of shopping in Diagon Alley could fully form. "What about Voldemort!" Harry blurted out, and waited for Ginny to flinch. But she didn't.

"Don't worry Harry," Ginny said soothingly, "The Order's got everything set up. Just get ready, okay? We're leaving in an hour."

And with that, Ginny left to go get ready, leaving a much happier Harry Potter behind. Of course, whenever Fate sees a happy Harry Potter, it must intervene.

Harry walked with Ginny in Diagon Alley, feeling better than he had been in the entirety of the past week. A sunny day, a good (and quite

pretty) friend walking next to him, and Harry felt that today, things might just turn out okay.

He would have shot himself right then and there for jinxing it, if he could.

As he and Ginny walked, talking and pointing out certain things to each other, Ginny caught sight of Dean, and, mostly because of her obligations as his girlfriend, called out to him.

“Hey Dean!” Ginny called out, smiling at her boyfriend.

“Hey Ginny!” Dean said, smiling back at her, then turned to Harry. Something flickered in his eyes, but he smiled at Harry too and greeted him.

“Hey Dean.” Harry responded, and felt something worming its way back from his mind. Ginny said something about ‘choosing’ Dean on the train ride... Were they going out?

For some reason, this irked Harry a lot more than it should have.

Harry felt that there was a little tension, and decided that Ginny would probably like to be alone with her boyfriend. This idea irritated Harry, but he decided it was the polite thing to do.

“I’ll leave you two alone.” Harry said, forcing a smile on his face (which looked very realistic, thanks to his years of experience).

“Oh, well you don’t have to Harry-“ Dean began, but he was obviously not trying too hard to make Harry stay. Who would want their girlfriend’s old crush hanging around?

“It’s fine,” Harry said, waving his hand in dismissal. He wanted to get as far away from the two of them if they started doing... things.

That annoyance was beginning to build up, like water behind a dam.

Ginny nodded, feeling slightly relieved that Harry would leave and a tiny bit of her feeling strange. She squashed that feeling, and smiled at her boyfriend. They had a bit to catch up on.

Harry stewed quietly, watching Ginny and Dean walk ahead of him, feeling a loathing that was quite unnatural towards Dean, who had been a good friend to him for six years...

Of course, that train of thought was demolished by the terrified screams that shattered the morning air like a wrecking ball through glass.

Harry turned quickly, hand plunging into his robes as he looked around. "Oh, bloody hell." Harry muttered.

Everywhere, black robed and masked figures were popping into existence everywhere, wands readied and looking decidedly menacing.

Death Eaters, it seemed, had chosen this particular day to Apparate in and attack Diagon Alley. Voldemort, Harry could feel, wasn't there.

This wasn't about him, this was about causing terror and damage, Harry gathered as Death Eaters began torturing people and demolishing shops.

He just had really shitty luck.

Harry went for the nearest Death Eater first, who was too busy torturing a young girl to notice the angry Boy-Who-Lived behind him.

A second later, he was blasted headfirst into a brick wall, courtesy of Harry.

Harry looked at the girl looking at her. She was still breathing.

Harry felt a prickling on his neck and instinctively hit the floor, just before a purple colored spell struck the wall behind him. Harry growled and fired a Stunner, sending that Death Eater flying too.

Now, more pops were heard, and Harry turned, ready to curse the first one he saw into oblivion.

It turns out that the first one he saw was Remus Lupin.

And as he looked around, his wand raised, he saw that the pops were not more Death Eaters, but Order members.

Perhaps his luck wasn't as bad as he thought it was.

Remus smiled in relief that Harry was safe. The raid on Diagon Alley was not because of Harry, but every Death Eater, Snape had informed them with a disgusted look, was ordered to go after Harry on sight.

The Boy-Who-Lived attracted more bad luck and more danger than wet iron attracts lightning in the middle of a thunderstorm, on top of a hill.

Remus' thoughts were cut short when several more pops were heard. Apparently, someone had gotten word back to Voldemort that Harry was here.

That made things a bit worse.

But his day got better, when he caught sight of something. A very distinct silver hand, which belonged to a person whose scent, was unmistakable. Wormtail.

Remus grinned, one of the few moments when he actually looked like a werewolf, feral and predatory, with a glint in his eyes that spoke of revenge long wished for.

Whoever said revenge was a dish best served cold deserves to be drawn and quartered.

Remus blasted away multiple Death Eaters in rapid succession, his fury driving him onward. His emotions had been reaching a boiling

point, and seeing Wormtail, his best friend turned traitor, he forwent any qualms about not taking life.

This bastard had killed Lily and James, and brought Voldemort back. He deserved far worse than Remus could give.

But all the same, Remus would give it his all.

The grin on his face grew larger, and far more dangerous.

Harry watched as Remus took down several Death Eaters quickly, seemingly intent on reaching a certain Death Eater next to the ink shop.

Harry saw why when he saw a silver glint.

Any qualms Harry once had about Wormtail's death were gone. He would only regret that the prick didn't die sooner.

With that, he fired a Disarming Charm at another Death Eater, content to see Remus bring the rat to justice. Even if it wasn't the justice Sirius could have gotten, it was still justice. No matter the price.

Ginny fired her Bat Bogey Hex at one Death Eater who was running past her and Dean, who seemed more hesitant to fight. Ginny, empowered by her anger for what Riddle had done to her and the confidence she had from fighting Death Eaters just months before, let her fight with everything she had.

"Come on Dean! People need our help!" Ginny said, slightly annoyed, but she could sympathize. Fighting Death Eaters took more guts than most people had.

Dean gulped, but proved he was a Gryffindor when he stood alongside Ginny, firing spells.

Remus finally reached Wormtail while Dean proved he truly belonged in Gryffindor, and greeted his old friend with a faux friendly tone. "Hello, Wormtail."

The portly man squeaked, and turned slowly, disbelievingly. "He-Hello... Remus." He managed, stuttering and stammering.

The glint in his eyes grew. "Adlfictatio!" Remus roared, the light of the Pain Curse striking Wormtail's chest and causing plenty of pain, which gratified that dark part of Remus, the werewolf within. The traitor collapsed, wincing and gasping as the pain began to subside.

"How does it feel, Peter?" Remus asked, absolute loathing etched in every part of his voice and face, "How does a fraction of the pain you caused me, you caused Sirius, you caused Lily and James feel!" He lashed out with his foot every time he finished a sentence, every question punctuated by a vicious blow.

Wormtail only whimpered in pain, which served to anger Remus further, spurring a madness Remus had never felt before. "Tell me! Tell me! Tell me how you feel with just part of my pain!" Remus said, continually kicking Wormtail, who was barely able to block the kicks, but unable to get up. But Remus, in his rage, didn't notice Wormtail moving closer, into a position to strike, until it was too late.

Suddenly, he lashed out with his foot, catching Remus in his kneecap, sending the werewolf crashing to the floor, at the mercy of his one time friend...

Harry looked on in horror as Remus fell, and a second later, Wormtail was on him, striking at him with his hand. Harry's face went from horror to puzzlement. Why would Wormtail use a hand when he had a wand...

Harry's face went back to horror when he realized Wormtail was using his silver hand to attack Remus. "NOO!!! YOU BASTARD!!!" Harry roared, and burst from his position, his face a terrible mask of anger, hatred, fury, and sorrow that frightened those who saw him.

Ginny watched next to Dean as Harry kicked Wormtail's side in absolute hatred, but her mind was fixed on his visage as he passed. A cold, terrible mask that dwarfed the fury he held the day Sirius died.



“She killed Sirius! I’ll kill her!” The words still echoed in the depths of her mind, along with the terrible face that accompanied it. In that one moment, in that one place in time, Harry was no longer the Boy-Who-Lived, a hero, a friend, but... Tom. But Tom was nothing, nothing compared to this sight.

Harry looked like an enraged god, or a demon to be more precise, and Ginny believed that no one, not Dumbledore, not Voldemort could stop Harry while he was like this. She wasn’t certain Harry could stop himself.

She watched as Harry punched Wormtail once, twice, thrice, until a spell from the injured wizard blasted the Boy-Who-Lived into a shop window, and for a moment, the glass bent inward, before Harry was thrown inside, and the glass exploded, or perhaps imploded outward, slicing Ginny’s exposed skin and leaving small trails of blood to mar her white skin.

A second later, Dumbledore arrived on the scene and raised his wand. Wormtail’s cowardice was faster, though, even with a broken nose and jaw (courtesy of Harry Potter), he managed to Apparate away.

“Harry’s in there!” Ginny cried out to the Headmaster, pointing towards the shop.

Dumbledore nodded, and raced inside with a speed that defied his age, intent on reaching the Boy-Who-Lived.

Albus Dumbledore found Harry Potter, bleeding and unconscious, on the floor of a curio shop. Actually, on top of a shelf of knickknacks, but now was not the time to quibble.

“Remus... no...” Harry muttered, agitated and troubled, even in his sleep, however forcefully he was put into it.

Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts and Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, picked up the Boy-Who-Lived, Harry James Potter, like a baby, and cradled him in his arms, feeling pain that this was probably the first time Harry had felt this since Lily died.

Pushing that aside, he looked out of the shop, where Remus Lupin lay, gravely injured, obviously by silver poisoning. Wincing at the damage these two men had taken for so long, he cast a Portkey, and quickly suspended the Boy-Who-Lived on a stretcher, with Remus Lupin next to him, and took them both away, where their bodies could hopefully be healed.

If only the damage to their spirits was so easy to fix.

Thanks to Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, jbfritz, Samurai Demon-God Sekikage, David M. Potter, That Kid Crying In The Corner, SanityEscapesMe, Treck, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, CharmedMilliE, spacecatdet, moonlightwitch, skittles-07, Discombobulatedperson, SeleneA, Wren Truesong, Maxennce, Kathryn Black, Black-Hood, Lady of Masbolle, Tanydwr, summersun, Night-Owl123, harrysmom, BloodRedSword, ahbahr, Gyre, jeff, and Pleione for reviewing!

Q&A

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- James? An interesting idea. I think I might already have something, but hey, if I can change my mind. Dark Harry won't receive his name for a while off.

Samurai Demon-God Sekikage- Actually, "Want, Take, Have" is also the motto of evil, according to Angelus (Who, along with Hannibal Lecter, are whom I am trying to base Dark Harry on). Well, death is really how you view it. Reality bends to perception. (Star Ocean, the only game I've ever played that actually conveyed ideals).

David M. Potter- Why would he need a woman? He's evil, a twisted version of Harry, like one of those fun house mirrors. He doesn't need love, and he certainly doesn't want it. Not too many people lining up to love someone like him.

SanityEscapesMe- You'll just have to find out whose on the agenda, but yes, I think its obvious by my patterns that Peter will be going down. He is going to be with Ginny, (he being Harry, not Dark Harry),

but that's a while off, and there's really just a light H/G content as time goes on.

Treck- Draco... Lets just say that when Draco meets Dark Harry, I'm probably going to have to change the rating to R. (Wayyyy too scary for PG-13). Ginny does play some role concerning Dark Harry, but you'll have to find out what.

arekuruu-inabikari-no-She- Harry's next victim is quite easy to place. As for playing online, that'd be great, if I hadn't lost my cd-key a year ago. (I foolishly uninstalled Warcraft 3, because I needed space. I was quite pissed with myself over that.)

spacecatdet- Voldemort, his meeting with Dark Harry will be fitting. But that's later. I do think this is quite disturbing, which is why I'm thinking this should probably be R.

skittles-07- Because... of Deus Ex Machina! (Has no clue, blushes when reading the mistake)

Discombobulatedperson- Next person on the list, is Peter! (It is quite obvious.) Don't see how Dark Harry is sexy, I think he's just plain creepy. Again, that must be the Angelus and slight helpings of Hannibal Lecter in his personality.

SeleneA- Ginny and Harry is a bit off in the future, but her part in this story is going to grow. I can say that people will be tortured in the future, not just evil people.

Wren Truesong- I stand corrected. You are right, it is Harry's opinion, I am merely expressing it. Good reviews do deserve good responses. If I ever had any real contributions, like you, I'd review more often! Act IV was an Act I'm pretty sure I glazed over, especially the first part. I've read both Henry IV and Henry V (I was forced to read Henry IV, but I got interested and read Henry V for both work and pleasure). Actually, I think you're right. This is more serious and plot oriented. I was weird, probably from all the stuff bouncing around in my head. Klepto Harry is fun, but I was thinking more like he does it out of habit sometimes, or to impress the ladies. Its more like he has itchy fingers,

but he can wait. I suppose he's not a kleptomaniac so much as he's always in Thief mode.

Maxennce- An excellent idea, which was toyed with. Problems... Well, at this point, I can't tell you, but Dark Harry can't do that yet.

Lady of Masbolle- Question one, since I'm feeling generous, no, Voldemort has no demon within him, he's pretty much a demon already. To question two, well, I don't think Dark Harry can stay hidden forever, he's got his own agenda. He's just doing the natural villain thing, 'biding his time'. You know, if I didn't know better, I'd swear some of my reviewers (you and Tanydwr currently here) can read my mind. Harry's not going to be 'exorcised', but I can promise you some kind of confrontation between the two Harrys.

Tanydwr- Bingo! You've got it! Dark Harry isn't some kind of demon in the literal sense, he's Harry's Dark side. But there's more to the story than that. He's starting to become more and more like Angelus, but his origins are different. Ginny's relationship with Dark Harry will be quite similar to (Loud gong) and (Explosion), though. Well, I don't 'think' about what the demon does, I know what he does. His origins are mysterious, as well as his powers (None of you have really asked how he's doing all of that, probably too busy enjoying the torture.) I'd also like to thank you. One of your reviews gave me a good (a.k.a. bad for someone) idea for the story. You'll just have to find out what, though you (and probably a good number of bleep's fans) will probably get seriously upset.

summersun- If you're sick for loving this fic, then I'm sadistic for writing it! Hey, you hate those characters. It's cool to hate them and love their deaths. Yeah, them putting the clues together will be a fun process.

harrysmom- Thanks for reminding me of Hermione's saying! This Dark Harry is much more than a Harry without inhibitions, letting his dark emotions run free, much more.

ahbahh- I was feeling lazy. Don't let the naming of one spell ruin the story for you.

Gyre- Voldemort doesn't even know that Dark Harry is loose in the world. But when they clash...(shudders in anticipation)

AN: Don't really like this ending to the chapter (not a cliffie! evil smirk), but hey, they can't all be winners. Thanks for reading, and please review!

## Chapter 6 Shadows of the Past

Darkness, everywhere. Harry Potter found himself standing in nothingness, a void, where darkness was all there was.

“You killed me Harry.”

Harry’s head whipped around to see Remus Lupin standing there bloodied and beaten, gaunt and dead.

“You didn’t kill Wormtail. You killed me.” Remus said accusingly, glaring at Harry with lifeless eyes.

“I-No! I didn’t!” Harry protested, but he couldn’t help the half-heartedness in his voice.

“You killed me too, Harry.”

Now, standing next to the lifeless Remus, was the lifeless corpse of Sirius Black, standing there and glaring at him too. “You killed me. You killed me, I loved you and you killed me!”

“I DIDN’T!” Harry screamed, but even he didn’t believe himself.

“Is this what we died for Harry? So that you could kill our best friends, except for the one who betrayed us!”

Now Harry turned and saw his parent’s bodies glaring at him, and he found himself losing to the darkness...

“You brought me back, Potter.” A familiar, chilling voice hissed softly.

Now Harry, instead of standing in front of the bodies of Remus, Sirius, and his parents, was standing in front of Lord Voldemort, who looked stronger than ever. “Thank you Potter. I knew that you would kill this entire world.”

“I DIDN’T! YOU DID! WORMTAIL DID!” Harry screamed, yet a voice within him, a voice disagreed.

Suddenly the darkness screamed and twisted, and Harry lost himself within them, falling into an endless abyss that drowned him in darkness.

Now, Harry found himself standing in front of burning rubble of a building. Blood soaked every stone, leaving a look of red sandstone and paint everywhere.. Lying on the stone floor were Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, McGonogall, everyone he knew, dead. Then he noticed the four cracked tables and torn tapestries of Slytherin, Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw. Hogwarts.

Harry looked around for a gloating Voldemort, but found Voldemort dead too, crucified against a wall. Every Death Eater lay everywhere, dead, twisted and mutilated. Their blood also soaked the stone, coating them with natural crimson paint, the lifeblood of purebloods.

One thought echoed within him. Who did this?

Then Harry heard a scream, and laughter that froze his veins. He ran, amid the burning wreckage, and found himself horrified by the image in front of him, unable to move.

Lying against the wall, naked, bleeding, lifeless, with hundreds of tiny cuts and lifeless eyes, was Ginny. Lively, wonderful, lovely Ginny, dead against the wall.

Standing in front of her was a man of average build, his black hair and clothes indistinguishable from the black night. Harry knew without a doubt that this was who killed everyone.

"Who are you!" Harry roared, charging at the man, but when he turned, Harry was frozen on the spot.

It was himself. It was another Harry Potter, standing there, in black clothes and with black eyes uninhibited by glasses, but it was himself. There was no doubt. It was his mirror image, a twisted mirror at that, standing in front of him. His eyes, unlike Harry's emerald ones which showed his emotions most of the time, were an abyss. It felt as if his very core, his soul was being drawn into those eyes, and consumed within them.

“What the-What the hell is going on!”

His other self began laughing, and Harry sank to his knees, sank into an abyss of despair once more, amid the dead bodies of his everything he had ever known and in the wreckage of his only home.

The Weasleys and Hermione, who had been clustered around Harry’s hospital bed, lightly dozing, were rudely awakened when said boy began screaming, jerking straight upright with the most horrified expression etched on his face.

Harry didn’t know how long he screamed, but he didn’t think it was enough. He looked around though, and saw all the Weasleys standing around him, looking concerned. Ron looked slightly uncomfortable, but stood close by. Harry, despite all the bad feelings that had happened between them, grabbed Ron and pulled him into a hug, to reassure him that Ron, and therefore everyone was alive. “You’re not dead...” He whispered, before releasing Ron.

“You poor dear, it must have been a terrible nightmare.” Mrs. Weasley said soothingly.

“Terrible. I killed everyone. Remus, Sirius, my parents-“ Harry said quietly, not looking up, but Hermione cut him off.

“You didn’t kill Sirius or your parents. Remus is still alive. You have nothing to be guilty for.” Hermione said, trying to be as supportive as she could, to make up for everything.

“But I killed all of you. I killed Voldemort (Ignoring the winces from everyone present), his Death Eaters, but you guys too. All of you. I destroyed Hogwarts, and razed it to the ground.” Harry said shakily.

“You didn’t, Harry.” Ginny said, tugging on Harry’s arm. Ginny looked uncomfortable, still seeing that face Harry had made back in Diagon Alley. Harry’s head jerked up, and he grabbed Ginny and hugged her too. “I killed you last... But it wasn’t me! It looked like me, but I was looking at it!” Harry cried out, distraught.



Ginny pulled back and looked him squarely in the eye. "Then it wasn't you. It looked like you, but it wasn't you."

Harry seemed to calm down with that, and remembered something else. "Remus! Is he okay!" Harry cried out, trying to get to his feet, but Ginny and Hermione pushed him down.

"He's... hurt bad Harry. But they say he'll make it. Dumbledore will make sure of it. Trust him." Hermione said softly.

Harry snorted at trusting Dumbledore. Ginny decided to step in now.

"Harry, I don't know what your problem is with Dumbledore and I don't care! He's the one that pulled you out of that shop window, before he even glanced at Remus. He cares about you damn it, and this feud between you two is hurting both of you! So suck it up!" Ginny yelled, remembering how old and tired Dumbledore looked when he came out of that shop, how weak he seemed.

It seemed to strike a nerve with Harry. "He cares, because he needed to make sure his chances for winning are still intact," Harry sneered, "Nothing more."

Everyone seemed taken aback by Harry's vehement and venomous response, even Ginny. Before they could respond, a Healer bustled in to check on Harry, and ushered everyone out so he could rest.

Harry was afraid to slip back into the nightmare, but the fatigue soaked into every pore and bone in his body caught up with him, and he was dragged back down to the land of dreams and nightmares. Harry, despite very vocal protesting when he woke up by the Weasleys, Hermione, and most of the medical staff, forced them to let him see Remus. He'd be damned if he let the last true Marauder alone in a hospital. Not when it was his fault.

As Harry reached the room, Dumbledore stepped behind him. "I should have known you'd go here, Harry." The aged wizard said gently.

"I am quite predictable. But I guess you know that, don't you?" Harry asked, grasping the doorknob so tightly it could have popped off. He did not want to see Dumbledore, illustrated literally as he had not even glanced back at the Headmaster's direction.

"I'm not here to stop you Harry. Go on, go inside. I'll wait out here. I have things to discuss with Remus." Dumbledore said, nodding towards Harry.

"I don't need your permission," Harry said quietly, but went inside.

Albus Dumbledore sighed. Harry's trust was easy to obtain, but harder to regain. He just hoped one day, the Boy-Who-Lived would allow him back in.

Harry crept in slowly, hesitantly. Guilt weighed on him heavily, so much you could see it. Or smell it Remus' case.

"Stop feeling so guilty, Harry." Remus said sternly, which was quite an accomplishment for a man looking like death warmed over.

"But-If I let you kill Peter the first time none of this-" Harry started, but Remus cut him off, managing a slight glare from his eyes.

"If you had, we'd have been no better than Peter. Besides, Sirius would never have had a chance to get free if we did." Remus replied, forcing more strength into his voice. What was unsaid was that Sirius would never be free now. Not in the regular sense, anyway.

They stood (or lay, in Remus' case) in silence for a moment. Finally, Remus coughed, and broke the silence with his voice a moment later. "Harry, I'm sorry I couldn't be there for you throughout your life, and it doesn't look like I'll be there for the rest of it, either-" Remus began, but Harry cut him off.

"You have to live! Please Remus, don't leave me too! I couldn't bear it!" Harry pleaded, grasping Remus' shoulders tightly.

Remus smiled at Harry, touched by the Boy-Who-Lived's concern. "It doesn't look too good Harry. The doctors are hopeful, but it's still uncertain. I just don't want to leave without telling you that." Remus said softly.

"I don't want you to leave!" Harry cried out.

"I don't either Harry," Remus whispered soothingly, "But we can't have everything we want. Life is short. I learned that lesson fifteen years ago."

Harry didn't need to think about what had taught Remus that lesson. The day all of his best friends left him. "You can't leave Remus. Please." Harry whispered.

"I'll try, Harry." Remus whispered, but suddenly he began coughing violently. Harry looked up in horror, before a bit of blood flew from Remus' mouth and right against Harry's cheek. Harry didn't even notice, he went outside quickly and saw Dumbledore.

Despite everything that had happened, Dumbledore was still powerful, and could help Remus. "Professor Dumbledore, Remus! He's-" Harry began, but Dumbledore understood, his face going grave and quickly, he called out for a Healer, and went inside.

Harry was about to follow, when a Healer pushed him out. "Sorry kid," the Healer whispered, "But no minors allowed."

Harry was about to protest when the door slammed. He was out of the loop again.

The Boy-Who-Lived began swearing violently, throwing a violent fit, feeling anger and rage course through his veins. If only he had let Remus and Sirius kill Wormtail, this wouldn't have happened. None of it. Harry screamed and punched the wall, feeling the pain and taking it, allowing him to feel something other than rage, anger, and numbness.

"Harry?"

The sound of Ginny's voice cut through his anger for a moment, and Harry managed a choked "Remus."

Ginny gasped. "Is he—"

"He's... in bad shape. Worse than I thought. It's all my fault." Harry said dejectedly, and began walking towards his room.

"It's not Harry." Ginny said, running to catch up to Harry, but Harry's furious pace was faster and he reached his room, and slammed the door, with a "Yes it is!"

"Harry! Open this door! It's not your fault!" Ginny yelled.

"Leave me alone!" Harry screamed, and his voice seemed to change a little, getting ethereal, with darker tone to it. It frightened Ginny, reminding her of the diary, once more. The parallels between Harry and Tom seemed endless.

Then there was silence.

Wormtail sat in a deserted corner of Riddle Manor. Although his master was pleased with Wormtail seriously injuring the werewolf, not capturing Harry Potter, and even getting injured by him, was a grave disappointment.

His voice was still hoarse from all the screaming he had done.

No one else was there, having dispersed after regrouping, Wormtail had been designated keeper of the Manor, which was considered a worthless job, for a worthless rat, Bellatrix had once commented before she disappeared. After all, one could not wander around when one was considered dead by society.

Voldemort was deeply angered by the loss of his prodigy, but pleased with two top ministry officials, and the two being the Minister and his Undersecretary, to boot, disappearing as well. It seemed a third party had taken up a role in the war.

Wormtail shivered for a moment, feeling an intense cold settle over him, a numbing, freezing cold that seemed deeper than physical, as if freezing his very soul.

It grew darker, but again, this was one of the hot spots for Voldemort's operations. Creepy things didn't happen here, they lived here.

But then something happened that was beyond the norm for a hideout of the Dark Lord. After all, the archenemy of the Dark Lord, the Boy-Who-Lived, Harry James Potter, does not normally appear within the bowels of one of the main fortress of said Dark Lord.

He looked different, from the abyss like midnight black eyes, to the similarly colored clothing, to the lack of his trademark beaten and worn wire glasses, to the fact that his very presence seemed to warp the area. All in all, an intimidating sight, especially for cowards.

"Hello Peter." Harry greeted cheerfully, as if he was greeting an old friend he had not seen in a long time.

"He-He-hello, Harry." Wormtail greeted cautiously, not expecting such a tone of voice from the son of the people he betrayed. He reached for his wand, when suddenly he froze.

His hand stopped short, and stopped responding to him. It was as if he didn't have it anymore. Then, his wand was gone, and into the hands of Harry Potter, who looked bemused.

"Naughty, naughty." The demon said softly, looking and sounding like a father catching a son having too many sweets. "Were you planning to curse me again, Peter?"

Peter Pettigrew simply looked at him, about to piss his pants.

Suddenly, there was only darkness where Harry Potter had once stood.

"Boo."

Peter screamed, and felt uncomfortable warmth within his lower part of his robes. He was white as a ghost, and looked about ready to faint.

He turned shakily to see the grinning Harry Potter behind him, a demonic glint in his eyes. "You afraid of ghosts?" The demon asked softly. "Are you afraid one day the Marauders will show up, haunting you?"

Now the rat Animagus was far too pale, even for a ghost.

"Maybe we should find out what they would say, hm?" Dark Harry asked, looking thoughtful. He disappeared again.

All of a sudden, a very familiar sound, an impossibly familiar voice, that the balding, portly man had heard many times in his youth, called out. "Hello, Wormtail."

Wormtail, if he could have, would have shat on the spot. It was impossible. Improbable. And Harry Potter had done it anyway.

Standing around him, reunited at last, were the Marauders.

Prongs, alias James Potter, stood in front of him, glaring at him.

Next to him, was Padfoot, alias Sirius Black, looking at him so hatefully the words death glare did not do it justice.

Finally, on the other side of Prongs, was Moony, alias Remus Lupin, who glared as well.

They were also looking like ghosts. But it was impossible. The ghosts of two of those men had never shown up, and Remus Lupin, last he heard, was still alive.

"You killed us Wormtail." Sirius whispered.

"You sold us out." Remus said.

“You betrayed the Marauders, you betrayed your friends. How could you?” Prongs asked, his voice a deadly whisper, like a small but deadly dagger.

“Prongs... Padfoot... Moony...” Wormtail whispered helplessly.

“HOW COULD YOU!” They all yelled in unison, their voices uniting in a tide of sound that knocked Wormtail to the ground with the force of their hatred.

“YOU BETRAYED US!” They yelled again in unison.

Wormtail tried to cover his ears, to no avail. The sound of their voices was impossible to stop, like the Killing Curse that took James’ life.

“TRAITOR!”

Wormtail screamed. “MAKE IT STOP! PLEASE! MAKE IT STOP! GO AWAY!”

“TRAITOR!”

“Please... stop... no more...” Pettigrew whispered.

“I said that,” Sirius whispered, “When the Dementors came by. Taking away every memory I had of the days when you used to be our friend, if you ever were our friend.”

“Did you show that boy, Cedric any mercy?” Remus asked.

“Did you hesitate to sell me and Lily and Harry out to Voldemort!” James screamed.

“TRAITOR!” They yelled once more, and Pettigrew stopped trying to protest, knowing it was true, as always.

The Marauders surrounded their wayward ex-friend, and surrounded him, with constant cries of “Traitor!”

As they got closer, Wormtail began trying to plead for his life. "What-What are you-Please! NO! NO!"

Wormtail was then surrounded by the angry spirits of the Marauders, and screamed in a way that only one who was facing there greatest fear could scream.

The demon watched as Wormtail let out his screams, closing his eyes like a heavily addicted smoker with his first cigarette in days. It slaked, but did not quench his thirst for death. Nothing would. It filled a void, where he could take pain and use it to feel, to feel pleasure. The dark pleasures of killing felt good, giving him a rush like nothing else could.

It was no wonder Dark Wizards kept popping up.

Finally, he remembered that it would be suspicious if Harry Potter disappeared then reappeared hours later, so he finished up his business.

"Bye-bye Wormtail." He whispered softly, his voice indiscernible from the screams of the man at his feet.

The screams picked up into a rising crescendo, and then suddenly stopped, and all that could be heard was laughter that cut deep into the soul...

Thanks to gallandro-83, Maxennce, Wren Truesong, The Kid Crying In The Corner, Saetan, Tanydwr, Pleione, Harrie, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, jbfritz, The Best witch of all, Night-Owl123, HedwigPig, bri, Lunatic Pandora1, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, ThePianoFiend, BlueAdonis, David M. Potter, ADJ, Ginerva Potter, Gyre, snore, IceSugarHigh, Favorte cousins foreva, Emma Barrows, Kathyryn Black, harrysmom, MA, gjnfioh, Discombobulatedperson, mashimaromadness, and Freya4 for reviewing!

Q&A

gallandro-83- Excellent ideas. Don't mind the nice men in black who have that shiny device. Just look at it. All kidding aside though, damn.



You're not wrong in your guess's, the demonic references are metaphorical, not literal (or are they?). You really hit the nail on the head. As for Ron, he doesn't know about Harry's inner evil. Ginny is the only one alive who has an inkling... Also, the evil presence... well, as you can see, it escapes mortal eyes.

Maxennce-That was Harry being angry, not evil. But part of the demon got mixed in with him. As for Dean, his role is going to be pivotal in the chapters to come.

Wren Truesong- I actually never considered Dark Harry going after Dean. But Dean won't be a target until some people realize their feelings. Then things get messy. There are three plays with Henry V, but in the first one, he's just a kid. Well, Harry does have power that he can't use yet, but how it relates to Dark Harry is a mystery for another chapter.

The Kid Crying In The Corner- No evil Remus here I'm afraid. (Though tempting it is.) And as you can see, I again take the more traumatizing way out, rather than physical pain.

Saetan- It wasn't a fall, so much as the fact that he got blasted through a window.

Tanydwr- Well, you probably will be swearing at me in a few chapters then. But which one? (Laughs maniacally) And I agree with you that a character sometimes has to die in order to further the story. One of your guesses is correct. You'll have to figure it out. As you can see, Wormtail didn't die until this chapter. I do have a name. But again, something cooler pops up, and I'll take it.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- Lots of people want a Dark Ginny, but it doesn't work with how I've planned everything. Ginny won't go evil, and her circumstances are different than Harry's. You'll see why later. Dark Harry works alone.

ADJ- I'm glad that the things you don't like about the story don't keep you from reading it. I figured there would be someone who said Ron wouldn't say something like that. You give him a lot more credit than I do then. I never made it seem that Ginny watched Sirius die, at least

from how I wrote it. I simply made reference to the fact that Harry, if you recall (and don't doubt, I have my copy of OOTP in front of me!), ran after Bellatrix, and it specifically mentions him running past Ron, Luna, and Ginny. Finally... I don't get how Ginny would not be scared if Harry looked like Tom, her (your words, not mine) greatest fear. Unless someone changed the meaning of the word greatest or fear, I must have missed the boat on what you were trying to say.

Ginerva Potter- Thanks for the well wishes. I'm (strangely) glad that this story is creepy. Puts me in a Halloween mood.

snore- You don't have to read the Q&A. As for your insults... yawn. Someone's cranky, and I already had my nap. (Normally, I try and use logic and refrain from insults against flamers, but... this is just too pathetic. I had to make a jibe.)

harrysmom-Dark Harry is not like Angel (when he gets his soul), or Spike, or Kenshin, or any other villain who turns good. He is like Angelus. Evil to the core, irredeemable. I toyed with the idea of Ginny or someone else taming him, but it doesn't fit how I'm going to write him. Their relationship will not be like Buffy (who carries the stake) and Angel (who loses, gains, loses, etc. his soul), but similar to someone else's relationship with Buffy. As for the still sane Harry, I gave you all a taste of a confrontation between the two. Will a true confrontation ever occur? I'd love to say, but I won't.

mashimaromadness- Making a new Voldemort? What? Who's a new Voldemort? Hey, it's cool that you have to go to bed and all. High school's tough.

AN: A poetic way to go, I think. I forgot to mention in earlier chapters that Dark Harry doesn't need glasses. Well, I hope you enjoyed this chapter (reviews are always nice! J)

## Chapter 7 The Journey Home

Harry was let out of the hospital the next day, mainly because Harry kept glaring at whoever tried to suggest he stay there any longer.

Remus survived that attack, and would most likely survive the Healers said, but he would be out of action for at least a month.

It took about twenty minutes before Harry could talk without his eyes burning up and his throat tightening. He nearly cried in relief. Remus simply smiled at him and told him to keep his chin up. "Things will get better." Remus whispered, before pulling the Boy-Who-Lived into a hug.

Then Harry cried.

Harry drifted throughout the next few hours, days, weeks, until September 1st came around. He felt lost, disconnected from himself, watching the world from the third person. It was as if someone else was running his body, while his soul watched the world drift all around him.

For the most part, everyone tried to give Harry some space, even Ron, Hermione, and Ginny, the last of them acting strangely from time to time. She looked at him strangely, as if something would happen if she wasn't looking.

Harry didn't notice a thing. He felt numb. The course of events over this past month had nearly broken him, and now it was back to school.

As much as he despised Grimmauld Place, going to Hogwarts meant facing the ridicule and ever watching eyes of the student body.

For once, Harry didn't want to go to Hogwarts. It would bring back too many memories.

Harry felt certain that if he ever looked at the fireplace, the one-eyed witch statue, or any other landmark that even remotely reminded him of Sirius, he would almost collapse with grief again.

At least here and at Privet Drive, he had solitude. There was no solitude within Hogwarts.

And so it was with a heavy heart, Harry Potter boarded the Hogwarts Express, surrounded by the Weasleys, Hermione, and of course, his guard, feeling alone.

After Ron and Hermione had departed for the Prefects meeting, both of them looking concernedly at Harry before they left, Harry found a compartment sans Ginny, who left to find Dean (which caused Harry to clench his fist reflexively), the only occupants being a nervous looking Neville Longbottom and Luna Lovegood, with the same dreamy look in her eyes as the first time Harry met the strange witch.

After exchanging a few greetings, they sat in silence for a moment, until Neville coughed slightly and pulled out a new wand. "Its my new wand, to replace my dad's wand." Neville managed, smiling at his new wand.

"That's great Neville," Harry said, almost choking on his own words when he flashed back to when it broke, "I'm sorry about your dad's wand."

Neville waved it off. "It didn't really work for me. Gram didn't even yell at me, she just kind of looked at me for a moment and took the wand." Neville smiled softly, remembering the proud looks his grandmother, the normally stern authoritarian face in smiles. 'I'm so proud of you', She whispered.

Again, they sat in silence, Neville occasionally stroking his Mimbulus mimbletonia, which made an odd crooning noise.

Quite a peaceful moment.

As if sensing a peaceful moment in the otherwise turbulent life of the Boy-Who-Lived, Draco Malfoy appeared at the carriage door, flanked, as always, by the ape-like companions Crabbe and Goyle.

“Still alive there Potter? That’s a pity.” Malfoy sneered.

“Get out Malfoy.” Harry said coldly, waving his hand, hoping to some higher power that Malfoy, for once, for just one time, would leave.

No such luck.

“What, no rousing tales about how you successfully foiled another attack by the Dark Lord?” Malfoy asked, mock-horrified.

Harry felt the blood begin to pound, and his ire beginning to rise, always just beneath the surface. “Shut it, Malfoy, and get the hell out.”

“Swearing Potter? That’s not something the Golden Boy should be doing.” Malfoy paused, smirking. “Are you upset because my aunt put down that little doggy of yours?”

“YOU SON OF A BITCH!” Harry roared leaping from his seat right at the Malfoy heir, who actually looked surprised and horrified as the Boy-Who-Lived tackled him the ground, landing a punch before Crabbe and Goyle realized that their leader was in danger, and lumbered over, and hit Harry right in the ribs with their feet.

This caused Neville to curse Crabbe, while Luna did the same to Goyle. The two lumbering Slytherins were hurled from the compartment, while Harry and Malfoy continued to tussle on the ground, before Harry lashed out, stronger than the pureblooded wizard, who shunned the menial activities that gave Harry sinewy and lithe muscles.

As the Malfoy heir lay on the ground, winded by the vicious kick, Harry Potter towered over him, glaring at him with such raw fury and dark rage that he shivered. His emerald eyes had darkened to an almost black color, and something truly dangerous flickered behind those orbs.

“Get out.”

Malfoy's gray eyes hardened. "This isn't over Potter. The Dark Lord will come for you."

"Then tell him to come. I'll be waiting," Harry said dangerously, his eyes bleeding with power, his voice seething with fury. He slammed the door in Malfoy's face, turning around rapidly, before sitting back down.

The only sound for a while was the slow rumbles of the train, strangely ominous and foreboding, like the gatherings of a storm.

"Harry, what did you do to Malfoy!" Hermione cried out, looking very disappointed at her friend.

Ron was having the opposite reaction, looking like he could dance, possibly on a certain Slytherin's grave. "That was bloody brilliant Harry! Malfoy and his goons are seething!" Ron said gleefully.

Harry, for the most part, ignored them. Something was wrong with him. It was getting easier and easier to fly off the handle, even without Malfoy's taunts. Was Voldemort tapping into his emotions? Was it grief? Was it... something else?

Harry didn't know, but after he got angry, he felt a sinking, retreating feeling, akin to a snake slithering off into the darkness...

And it didn't feel right. It wasn't Voldemort, Harry knew. He remembered, in every painful detail, Voldemort's possession of him and the moment when he felt the snake retreat from his body. When this snake retreated, it went deep within him, burrowing into his very soul.

"Where's Ginny?" Ron asked, scanning the compartment.

"I, uh, she went up to see Dean." Harry said cautiously, backing up slowly, his musings broken by the redhead. There was no telling what Ron's reaction would be. Oh wait, yeah there would. Just one kind of reaction. Harry counted off mentally, 1,2,3.

"WHAT!"

That one.

It took the combined force of Hermione, Harry, Neville, and Luna to keep Ron from tearing out of the compartment, ripping Dean's head off, and shipping Ginny off to a nunnery.

"Honestly Ron," Hermione began, and nearly everyone just tuned out, sensing a speech the way that animals sense incoming earthquakes. Hermione's various lectures and speeches could be classified under several categories.

- 1) Ron's a prat.
- 2) S.P.E.W. speech.
- 3) It's not spew, its S.P.E.W.!
- 4) Study.
- 5) Grow up Ron!

This one would go under category five, Ron and Harry noted, meeting each others eyes and, despite the turbulence of their friendship over the past few weeks, shared a silent grin, rolling their eyes in unison.

Finally, they arrived at Hogwarts.

Harry looked out towards the carriages, wincing as he saw the thestrals. Neville whispered softly, "I can see them."

Harry's head whipped around, piercing Neville, before turning to the ground. "Sirius..." Harry whispered brokenly.

Ron and Hermione tugged Harry towards the carriage, who moved blindly, with Neville and Luna following behind, watching the broken Boy-Who-Lived.

Harry, despite the terrible events before and after he left Hogwarts, smiled to himself. Hogwarts. The magic never truly left him.

He smiled, small but noticeable to those around him. It faded after a moment, when Harry caught an unwelcome sight.

“Damn. I had hoped Snape died over the holidays,” Ron muttered, shaking his head in defeat. He turned towards Harry and gave him a pitying look. “Can’t believe you decided to take Potions again, mate.”

Harry smiled again, but it was tinged with sourness, from having to endure Snape once more. Although he had only achieved an E on his Potions Exam, McGonogall had come through for him, that, and the fact that they would not offer Advanced Potions if there were only about three people, all of them save Hermione Slytherins, taking the course. Harry had cracked a grin, the first in a while, when he imagined Snape’s face when he had to admit all the students who got an E in the course.

Snape turned his cold black eyes and for a moment, he and the Boy-Who-Lived met eyes, and that same hatred passed through both of them, one because of an old grudge, one a newer grudge.

Harry stopped however, when he caught sight of the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. “Sweet Merlin, it’s Tonks!” Ron said in amazement. “This is loads better than Umbridge!”

Harry knew that nothing could be worse than Umbridge, hell, he would have preferred anyone (well, maybe not Snape), but Tonks was a welcome addition.

He saw the clumsy Auror wave to them, mouthing the words ‘Later.’

Harry smiled, and took his seat. He looked around, seeing the various awed, cautious, and downright hostile looks from various members of the crowd. Harry sighed, losing his smile. This definitely seemed familiar.

He looked up to avoid the gazes of the student body, but crossed eyes with Dumbledore, who looked at him intently. Harry glared back.



He saw the Headmaster sigh in defeat, and look back to his plate for a moment.

Harry looked up, feeling that every year, Hogwarts lost a little bit of its magic every year, that appeal that captivated him first year was waning.

The world just hadn't felt the same since Voldemort had come back. Or maybe he was just starting to learn the real world. After all, his destiny was tied in with Voldemort's. He was destined to face Voldemort, and the world was righting itself.

It didn't seem to occur to the world that Harry liked his world just the way it had been at the end of third year, with Sirius alive, hope for a new life ahead. Now that was gone.

Harry felt the snake beginning to crawl back up again...

After the Sorting (With Zelpher, Nel going to Gryffindor), Dumbledore stood up, locking eyes with Harry for a moment before smiling to look at the student body.

"Welcome, first years. To our returning students, welcome back. I know you are all anxious to get to feasting, and so am I!" Dumbledore clapped his hands, and the food appeared.

Once the sumptuous feast was over, Dumbledore stood up again. "A few announcements before we turn in for the night. First of all, I'd like you all to welcome our new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Nymphadora Tonks."

Tonks flushed with the praise and the use of her first name, bowing her head. Snape ignored Tonks, as per his usual modus operandi with DADA teachers.

"She is a Ministry Auror who is one of those assigned to guard our school, and she has graciously accepted the post of Defense Against the Dark Arts as a supplement. I am sure you will all learn much from

her.” Dumbledore smiled. “Now, as always, the Forbidden Forest is forbidden, despite what some of the older students have told you.” Now Harry colored a bit. It wasn’t his fault he ended up there every year, he just... couldn’t help his saving-people thing.

His mood soured. Harry tuned out as Dumbledore read out a few more pointless and meaningless (to him) announcements, and scanned the tables, feeling a not so tiny rush of anger as Ginny sat next to Dean, as irrational as it was. He looked back towards the crumbs on his plate, studying them to ward off the intense anger at Dean (which was completely insane, he had no grudge against him), and the numbing feeling of drowsiness seeping into his bones.

Ron shook him. “Mate? Come on, lets go up to Gryffindor tower. You’re exhausted. And come on, you have to help me keep an eye on Dean!” Ron said, but tried to hide his voice so neither Hermione nor his not so little sister heard him.

Luckily, they didn’t catch him, and Harry nodded, thinking he’d rather not catch Dean and Ginny snogging...

In what seemed like an eternity, but was probably a mere minutes, Harry found himself stumbling into his dormitory, blindly putting his glasses on the nightstand before hitting his head on the pillow, passing into the deep oblivion of sleep, untroubled by Voldemort, Dean and Ginny snogging, or Potions class.

Thanks mashimaromadness, Freya4, madskillzpro, Samurai-Demon-God-Sekkikage, Lady of Masbolle, Wren-Truesong, FroBoy, Hunter101, BalrogMan65, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Pleione, SanityEscapesMe, RealityIntrovert, Night-Owl123, harrysmom, DarkPhoenix011, jbfritz, CharmedMilliE, Kathyrn Black, Maxennce, Tanydwr, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, ShadowWalkerZero, Phoenix Man, Lunatic Pandora1, and japense-jew to for reviewing!

## Q&A

Samurai-Demon-God-Sekkikage- I never said he was going to be like something off of Buffy the Vampire Slayer in the literal sense. He and Harry will be somewhat like Yami/Yugi, without the merging. I simply

said that Demon Harry will end up acting like Angelus, who is the best evil guy I've ever seen.

Lady of Masbolle- Perhaps someone will pick up on the clues, someone I've hinted at...

Wren-Truesong-I'm glad you liked the Wormtail trick, and as for Henry V being Sirius-like is an accurate assessment.

Hunter101- I'm glad you think the dual personality thing is original, and as for demon blood, I'm not going to do that here.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- Nothing so grandiose. I'm afraid no one else is going to change sides, and Dark Hermione would interfere with the plot... (begins laughing insanely, before coughing and looking nonchalant) As for the song, thanks for the tip!

harrysmom- I'd love to answer but... well, I can't. And I don't take offense, understanding evil Harry is key to the story. But no character knows all the facts, not until the end.

DarkPhoenix011- Harry v. Harry? Crazy. Absolutely crazy. Was the dream just a dream, or a foreshadow of things to come? You'll have to guess.

Maxennce- Oh no, Wormtail's definitely dead. Your assessment is nice, but off a bit. You're forgetting I've been making a distinction between Harry and his dark side from day one. He hasn't lost his soul, but he does stand close to falling into darkness. But he's far from being unable to be saved by Ginny.

Tanydwr- You've misinterpreted my use of the word relationship. Its definitely not a boyfriend-girlfriend thing I'm setting up for Dark Harry and Ginny. Mental torture is Dark Harry's modus operandi, but other types of torture are also vicious and breaking. Dark Harry is a fan of all forms of torture.

japense-jew- Yes, wizards do need incantations for magic in general sense. (Interpret the cryptic message however you like) As for it being close to the Yu-Gi-Oh manga... that was part of the intent, but

for this part of the story, it has to be close. It will get very different later on. Dark Harry is so not ending up like Yami, all tame and righteous.

AN: I don't own the name Nel Zepher, which is property of Tri-Ace. Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 8 Draconis Mortem

Harry Potter woke up refreshed, ready to start the day, thinking his luck might just change, now that he was back at Hogwarts.

He would have shot himself right then and there for jinxing it had he known earlier.

First came the stomach turning (for no reason, of course) good morning kiss Dean gave Ginny. Sure, it was a peck on the cheek, but it felt like someone had stabbed him in the gut when he saw it.

Harry ignored it, thinking he was just hungry. Of course, people once believed the Sun revolved around the Earth.

So Harry continued on with breakfast, eating steadily, ignoring Ginny's occasional giggle at something Dean said, feeling quite dejected.

Ron and Hermione began squabbling over Merlin-knows-what and probably something no one but them ever gave a damn about.

Harry was quite pleased for the distraction Professor McGonagall provided when she came around to bring them their schedules.

That was of course, before he saw his first class.

"Bloody hell," Harry muttered bitterly, "Double Potions with Snape first thing. This is going to be a great day."

Ron gave a sympathetic nod, and Hermione, used to the constant complaints her best friends had and even agreeing with some of them, mostly the ones about Snape's treatment of Harry, simply looked neutral.

"Bad luck there, mate. I still say you're bloody mental, taking Potions." Ron muttered.

"Ron! Language!" Hermione said snappishly, before turning to Harry. "You'll do fine Harry, just like on your O.W.L."

Harry offered her a weak smile. "Sure," but something told him that all the luck in the world wouldn't change Snape's attitude.

And of course, Harry was right. But before he even got inside the dungeons, his luck had taken a turn for the worse in the form of the sneering face of Draco Malfoy.

"Looks like Potty here managed to get lucky again, huh gents?" Malfoy smirked, looking at Crabbe and Goyle, hardly the description of gentlemen, Harry noted.

"Not today Malfoy." Harry muttered angrily, trying to push past him.

"You're not going to get lucky every time Potter. And I'll be there to see it." Malfoy said, the veiled threat clear.

Harry glared dangerously at the Malfoy heir. His eyes darkened considerably. "No you won't." He uttered with conviction, his threat clear.

The two glared at each other for a while, before Hermione (who had been busy harassing Ron on not studying during the time he had off this period) came in. Immediately, she knew this was a dangerous situation, one that could get very, very violent within a matter of moments. And with the rough summer Harry had been put through... Malfoy might end up in the Hospital Wing in a matchbox.

"Harry? Let's go," Hermione appeased, tugging on Harry's arm softly. .

Harry managed to break the glaring competition and stalked into the dungeons, a foul mood permeating within him, as well as a creeping rage and darkness within...

After a particularly harrowing and nearly unbearable Potions class, in which Snape took fifty points away from Gryffindor thanks to Malfoy ruining Harry's potion, and Harry's protests against the taking away of the first twenty five points. And in the very opening moments, Snape made several nasty comments about Harry, although he didn't name anyone, the glares at Harry made it clear who he believed "had gotten in thanks to special... circumstances".

Harry, under the desk, gave Snape half the peace sign, chanting a mantra of I need to stay in Potions class, keep cool, keep cool, over and over

Harry thought it lucky, by the end of the class, that he hadn't killed Snape and used his skull to smash Draco's head in.

In an even fouler mood, he stormed out of Potions class the second the bell rang, leaving a panting Hermione to keep up with him. "Harry, are you-"

Harry turned one eye onto her over his shoulder, the look in his dark emerald eyes clear. Shut up.

She complied with the wordless command, simply walking alongside the Boy-Who-Lived, trying to find a way past the dark cloud hanging around him and swirling around him.

"I guess that E on the Potions O.W.L. was a fluke thanks to Marchbanks being blinded by the Golden Boy's brilliance." A painfully familiar voice drawled. Draco Malfoy stepped forward, flanked, by who else than Crabbe and Goyle.

"Not. Now. Malfoy." Harry ground out through his grinding teeth.

Hermione actually looked worried. For Malfoy, that is. Harry was a ticking time bomb right now, and the first person to push him too far might end up looking Saint Peter in the eye at the gates of Heaven.

"Bad day? Don't worry, you won't have to suffer forever." Draco feigned concern, before that damn smirk came back. "The Dark Lord will come for you, and your little band of Mudbloods and traitors."

That does it. He's a dead little wanker.

Harry spun around with unearthly speed, and before anyone could react he lashed out with his right fist, and connected solidly with Malfoy's jaw.

Draco Malfoy hit the floor, whimpering in pain, before glaring up at his two bodyguards. "Get him you twits!" Draco snarled.

Crabbe and Goyle lashed out at Harry who took two punches to the gut and one to the chest before stumbling back, and grabbing his wand.

Distantly, he heard Hermione's pleading voice and someone else's outraged tone, but he didn't give a damn. He had had enough.

The roaring in his ears reached a crescendo, and he barely heard the words as a Stunner came flying out of his wand, striking Goyle in the chest while Crabbe lumbered towards him.

Out of the corner of his eye, the Malfoy heir had managed to get out his wand and let off a strange, purple colored curse. Harry spun aside as the spell struck the wall, leaving a significant burn on it. Harry let loose with an Impediment Jinx at Crabbe, while using a more powerful Force Spell to blast Draco back into the wall.

"MISTER POTTER!" McGonagall thundered in outrage. She summoned up his wand, and spun him around, looking him straight in the eye, looking furious. "What do you think you are doing!" She growled.

Harry glared defiantly back, but didn't say anything. Draco, on the other hand, began ranting about how "Potter went nutters" on them, before McGonagall silenced him with a look. "You, Mister Malfoy, are not getting away with that excuse. You deliberately taunted Mister Potter. The two of you will have detention for the next week. Separately, lest we have bloodshed on our hands." The last part was mumbled, but Harry caught it.

"Is that understood?" McGonagall asked, first looking at Malfoy, then Harry. Both boys mumbled and nodded, and glared at each other before storming away from each other.

That night, Draco Malfoy left the dungeons after cleaning the Potions cauldrons, feeling insulted. Not only was it demeaning for a noble pureblood such as himself to be subjected to menial labor, but Snape



actually had the gall to berate him, telling him that his cover would be exposed if he continued to taunt Harry Potter.

For Merlin's sake, Snape hated the boy!

Draco didn't understand. The Dark Lord and his followers were pure, were right. Why did they not attack, and crush the weak fools here?

It would make his life easier.

Suddenly, the hallway darkened and Malfoy instinctively reached for his wand, backing away slowly. All light seemed extinguished, as if Hell had swallowed this particular hallway up whole to get at him.

"Who's there!" Malfoy demanded, in his superior tone.

"Just me, Malfoy. Just me." Harry's ethereal voice said, echoing all around him, and he seemingly came straight from the shadows on the walls themselves. His eyes were completely black, and he looked like the Devil himself, clad in black clothing and with his strange, malevolent aura clearly visible. His eyes held nothing, nothing at all, not even malice or anger that he usually wore when confronted with the heir of the Malfoy's. They looked like portals into the abyss, hungry and waiting.

"Potter!" Malfoy snarled, "What are you doing here!"

"Just wanted to chat, Malfoy." Harry said mockingly.

"That'll be detention Potter, for being out of bounds." Malfoy said haughtily.

"I don't think so Malfoy. Your arrogant tone is really starting to piss me off." Harry snarled, his black eyes narrowing dangerously.

"What are you going to do about it, Potter?" Malfoy asked, removing his wand.

"I'm going to kill you." He said simply, and with such conviction that Malfoy knew it was true.

“Stupefy!” Malfoy cried out, firing his spell. It hit the shadows that surrounded Harry, and was absorbed.

“Pathetic. This is what your so called purity of blood can do?” ‘Harry’ asked disdainfully. “You call yourself a wizard.”

“My father-“ Malfoy began, but Harry cut him off.

“Will be dead soon enough. But you first. Now lets see if baby Malfoy had the stones to-“ The wind blasted Draco’s robes, lifting up his sleeve and exposing a tattooed mark of a skull with a snake for a tounge, and evil visage. The Dark Mark. “Looks like you did. So you take all that garbage from ole Tom?” The demon asked.

“I mean really, he’s a half-blood like me. Not even a pureblood. So why do you care so much for the eradication of muggles?” ‘Harry’ asked.

Malfoy glared at him, and said arrogantly, “It is the right of superior beings to crush those weaker than you. Purebloods are superior to muggles, and only they can purify the race. It is the birthright of our blood”

“If you believe so much in your purity of blood, then let us see if it can save you from me.” ‘Harry’ said.

Shadows engulfed Draco Malfoy, and he felt a burning sensation screaming from his core to his skin, a strange, ripping feeling, that felt as though his very blood was being forcibly torn, drop by drop, from his veins.

“Do you feel that? It’s your magic, that magic that you pride yourself on, the magic that runs in your very veins, your Malfoy magic.” The demon said calmly, sounding like a doctor telling a patient dispassionately that he’s going to die of a terminal disease. “In moments you will be nothing more than a squib, a muggle. Won’t that be fun?”

“NO!” Malfoy called out, feeling his blood boiling in agony. He screamed.

“Oh, and while I’m doing that, the magic is resisting, so it will feel like I just set your veins on fire. Hurts, don’t it?” Dark Harry asked, grinning maniacally. “Tell me if it works. After all, soon the rest of your kind, your daddy and his master will feel the same. You’re going to be my first test subject though.”

Draco didn’t answer, feeling the boiling reaching, well, the boiling point. His skin felt burned and charred, his insides turned and twisted and boiled as if they were in a pot. The pot was his body, the fire, his blood.

“Tell me…” The demon asked softly, circling him. “Or are you that weak?”

Draco opened his mouth to answer, but the burning sensation was too much. He fell to the ground, in absolute agony. It was like he was being held over the very fires of Hell, being lowered every five seconds, just a little bit, so that his death would be slow and painful. And just when the pain seemed unbearable, that nothing could be more excruciating, he was lowered deeper into the abyss and fire of Hell.

After an unknown period of time, seemingly eternity to Malfoy and seconds to the demon, the burning stopped, and Draco felt his blood begin to cool, his skin feeling like charred wood.

“It’s all gone now, Malfoy. You’re a squib.” Dark Harry laughed, surrounding him with the reverberations of his laugh and his darkness.

Draco Malfoy stood shakily, looking at the demon. He raised his wand, crying out, “Crucio!”

Nothing happened, save the demon kept laughing, shaking his head in amusement. “An Unforgivable, Malfoy? Naughty boy,” Dark Harry chided, before bursting out into another round of laughter.

The laughter sounded like the gates of the Netherworld opening up to welcome Draco in, creaking, welcoming him with a voice of ice and death.

“Now it’s time to part.” The demon Harry whispered, looking into the pale gray eyes of his childhood nemesis, and in a flash, Draco felt two sharp, burning pains on both sides of his chest.

He looked in horror at the obsidian blade that lay in the demon’s hands, gleaming with an obscene amount of the pure blood that Draco Malfoy prided himself on. The demon smiled at him as he fell.

As the Malfoy heir slumped to the ground, bleeding profusely, blood spraying out of his wounds like a mockery of a whale’s blowhole, Harry laughed, a cold, mocking laugh that drained all warmth from Malfoy’s body even faster than his approaching death.

“I’ve pierced your lungs, Malfoy.” ‘Harry’ explained, circling Draco, “In a matter of moments you will choke on your own ‘pureblood’.” He paused, looking at the dying Slytherin.

“I don’t think I really want to eat your soul, might give me indigestion with all that arrogance, and I already have your magic. But, one must always clean their plate.” Dark Harry said nonchalantly, sizing Malfoy up for a moment before bending down.

The demon looked Draco in his eyes, soulless black meeting fading gray, and he began laughing.

As Draco Malfoy went beyond the pale, he went hearing the sound of that cold, mocking laughter, like the Devil himself.

Thanks to japanese-jew, Pleione, CharmedMilliE, Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage, Night-Owl123, Harrie, Silver Butterfly04, Lunatic Pandora1, harrismom, Maxennce, HedwigPig, FroBoy, RealityIntrovert, Emma Barrows, Ginerva Potter, Tanydwr, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, csferosha, mashimaromadness, Lady of Masbolle, dan, and lalala879345 for reviewing!

Q&A

japanese-jew- Got it in one. I'm glad you liked the portrayal of Harry's anger.

Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage- Sounds cool, doesn't fit in with how Dark Harry operates. And it definitely doesn't work with the rest of the story.

Harrie- I don't think Neville be able to see them before Harry. That would be Luna. As for why Harry whispered Sirius, Neville could see the thestrals because Sirius died.

Lunatic Pandora1- It would be cool, but it isn't a dark rage mode. Harry has really no influence over it.

harrysmom- They might have, they might not have noticed. Harry went close to the edge, he didn't go over, that's why he can remember what happened. As for sleep... define sleep.

Maxennce- I rarely, if ever, say anything or do anything by accident. The relationship with Dean will have an influence on the story.

HedwigPig- As I said above, I'm not sure. I don't think he could.

Tanydwr- Your reviews aren't weird. As for the question that you, and a few others have asked, what is Dark Harry and Harry's relationship to one another, that's a very critical piece of information. Tormenting Ginny... (Coughs, turns away) Killing one of Harry's friends is something Harry would never do. Over analysis is quite alright, it might help in this story (its helped you get a few things right that I haven't revealed yet).

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- I didn't fry Malfoy, but is this acceptable?

mashimaromadness- Its fine, really. Fifteen hours? Wow... I can sleep at two in the morning and still wake up at eight, and feel fine.

Lady of Masbolle- Bingo!

AN: If you haven't guessed, I like the characters to die in appropriate, and in Malfoy's case, ironic ways to die. Well, don't flame me for his death and please review!

## Chapter 9 The Grudge

Harry's day seemed to be normal enough when he woke up to the sound of Ron, Dean, Seamus, and Neville's snoring, with a soft glimmer of sunlight peeking through the crimson curtains curiously.

Normal, of course, in the terms of Harry Potter, often includes things most people don't see in their darkest nightmares or most hectic days.

Harry groaned when he tried to get up, the aching weariness of sleep not leaving him, as did the desire to not go through the rest of the day. Compared to having to run the gauntlet of curious, expectant, and downright hostile eyes, Malfoy's mocking, Snape's taunts, added into the overwhelming guilt from Sirius and Cedric's death, and the Prophecy that loomed like a knife over his head, missing a few classes by sleeping in seemed nice.

But Harry was a Gryffindor, and as such, foolishly headstrong at times, and decided to face the day. He was no coward, who would hide away from his problems, he would face them head on.

Generally speaking, those kinds of tactics end up with the person executing them dead or grievously injured, but that was just how Harry was.

Luckily for him, one of his problems had been removed, albeit a bit more permanently than Harry had ever wanted, but a whole slew of problems was about to pop up.

It was about mid-breakfast when the first of his problems came up. Pansy Parkinson, flanked by Crabbe and Goyle, unusually enough, came right up to him, glaring at him. "What'd you do to him!" Pansy demanded shrilly, causing Harry to wince at her high pitched tone.

"What?" Harry asked, narrowing his eyes and raising an eyebrow.

"What. Did. You. Do. To. Draco!" Pansy shrieked accusingly, grabbing Harry's robes and shaking him.

At this point, several DA members had made their way over, and surrounded them. "Let him go." Ernie Macmillan ordered firmly.

Although Crabbe and Goyle were at the bottom rung of the gene pool, even they knew that this was a fight they could not win, so they backed off. Unfortunately, the nigh hysterical Pansy would not be deterred.

"What the bloody hell are you on about?" Harry shouted.

"I know you did something to Draco!" Pansy shrieked again, pulling her wand out to curse him when a timely Stunner from Ron sent her crashing into the floor.

"Thanks Ron." Harry said wearily, as the teachers came up.

"What is the meaning of this?" McGonagall asked, her lips thin as ever and her eyes narrowed dangerously.

"Pansy was about to attack Harry!" Seamus protested.

"Yeah, she came up to him and kept shaking him and demanding to know where that ba- Malfoy was." Ron said, correcting himself just in time as McGonagall's lips thinned out even more.

"Well, it is true that Mister Malfoy is missing." Snape cut in smoothly, glaring at Harry with his black eyes. "And Mister Potter did have detention that night as well as Mister Malfoy. So Potter? What did you do?"

"I didn't do anything." Harry hissed, trying to use his death glare to kill Snape, but unfortunately, it didn't work.

"Innocent until proven guilty, Severus." Dumbledore reminded him, coming up behind them.

"Of course Headmaster. Until proven guilty." Snape looked at Harry very dangerously with that last comment, before adding gleefully, "Your detention tonight is with me Potter."



Something told Harry that Snape wasn't about to rest when trying to implicate Harry for Malfoy's disappearance. "Bad luck there mate." Ron muttered, patting his shoulder. "Come on, let's get on to Charms before Hermione starts up again."

Harry only nodded numbly, at once thankful that he didn't have Potions till tomorrow and dreading having to face Snape that night, feeling that tonight was going to be one very painful night.

And it would be, for more than one person.

Earlier that morning, a meeting was taking place. A meeting that would have critical consequences on the days, the months to follow.

"I am telling you Headmaster, that boy is the reason that there have been so many mysterious disappearances lately!" Severus Snape shouted, but it was muffled within the Headmaster's silenced office.

"Severus, I cannot believe that Harry Potter would ever kill Draco Malfoy. Perhaps the other way around of course..." Minerva McGonagall trailed off pointedly.

"You just hate Harry, and so you want to believe the worst about him!" Nymphadora Tonks protested.

"Enough." Albus Dumbledore's words cut through the tension like a knife, and he eased back into his chair, tired. "Severus, while I admit that it is troubling that so many people whom have wrong Mister Potter have disappeared, I hardly think Harry had the ability to go after that many people."

"There's no other explanation, Headmaster!" Snape interrupted, "Five disappearances, all of them right after that same person has done something to Potter? The evidence all leads up to him!"

"The evidence is all circumstantial!" Tonks protested again, using all her knowledge as an Auror to keep Snape from implicating Harry. From what she had seen, the boy would never do that. "Harry Potter kill five people? Ridiculous!"

“Oh really?” Snape sneered. “Well he seemed quite content to use the Cruciatus on Bellatrix.”

The two women paled, and Dumbledore’s eyes blazed.

“Severus!” Dumbledore interrupted sharply.

“Sorry, Headmaster.” Snape said, bowing his head slightly in apology. “But you must let me interrogate the boy.”

Dumbledore knew Severus Snape never gave up on an idea once he got it into his head easily, and sighed. “Very well.”

Later that night, Harry grudgingly, no, was commanded to by Hermione, to go to detention with Snape. Despite his protests that one of them would kill the other at this rate (although Hermione, Ginny, and Ron gave him a strange look at this), and that Snape was liable to torture him for information, it was to no avail, and he found himself walking out of Gryffindor Tower.

As soon as he left, Hermione took Ginny and Ron to a secluded corner of Gryffindor Tower, much to Dean’s chagrin at being separated from his girlfriend and thankful that Ron was not glaring at him dangerously anymore.

“What Hermione?” Ron asked in annoyance at being pulled so forcibly.

“I’m not trying to implicate Harry, but don’t you think its a little strange that anyone who has done anything wrong to Harry over this past few weeks has gone missing?” Hermione bit her lip worriedly, looking torn between guilt at her ‘betrayal’ and concern over her friend.

“Hermione! You can’t be serious! How could Harry do all those things!” Ron said in outrage, standing up quickly, but his little sister and best friend pulled him down, back into his seat.

“Ron! Not so loud!” Hermione whispered fiercely.

“Look Hermione, Harry wouldn’t do that-“ Ron began to argue, but Ginny cut in with a low, fearful whisper.

“He could if he was being possessed. At St. Mungo’s he sounded... different, angrier, scarier at one point.” Ginny closed her eyes, horrified at the thought of anyone possessing Harry, much less Tom.

“You-Know-Who?” Ron whispered in terror.

Ginny nodded, not opening her eyes. Hermione stood up, knowing that there was only one course of action to take. “We need to see Professor Dumbledore then. Now.”

Harry stepped into the dungeons, feeling like he was being marched down death row for some odd reason. Then again, this was Snape.

“Come in Mister Potter, and have a seat,” Snape said smoothly, waving his hand at a seat in front of his desk, almost... politely?

Harry blinked once in consternation, before doing as Snape commanded, lest this strange mood be broken. Little did he know, Snape had learned interrogation techniques from the best, namely Lord Voldemort. Although the Dark Lord preferred torture, there were times when you could hear Lord Voldemort talking smoothly and politely, to convince friend or foe to join him, to talk.

And since Snape could not torture the brat, this would have to do. Besides, he thought to himself, fingering the tiny vial in his pocket, Veritaserum loosens all tongues.

“Um... Professor Snape sir, what will I be doing?” Harry asked once he was seated, looking around for a dirty cauldron to clean or some sulfur mines that Snape would be forcing him to work in.

Snape smirked evilly, and, with incredible speed, he whipped his wand out and flicked it, ropes tying Harry to the chair, much like those in the Ministry courtrooms.

“What the hell are you doing?” Harry demanded angrily, but Snape ignored him, and flicked his wand at the door, shutting it with a click. Grabbing the Veritaserum vial in his pocket, he opened the stopper and forced Harry’s mouth open, and was about to pour the clear liquid in, and finally get the truth.

Unfortunately for Severus Snape, it was not to be. As soon as Snape had tied him to the chair, outrage and fury began pouring through his veins, and once Snape revealed he was going to use Veritaserum, it set Harry off. Or rather, waked the monster within.

Suddenly, Snape was blasted back by a compressed blast of air, sending him flying into the wall quite painfully, dropping the Veritaserum on the ground, where it rolled away.

The ropes holding Harry snapped as he stood up, a titan rising from his throne to smite the heretic that dared defy him. The air around him began to darken, before the entire classroom was covered in darkness. The air around him began to twist malevolently, violently, and his eyes darkened till they became midnight black.

“Now that wasn’t very nice.” Dark Harry admonished, much like a parent scolds a naughty child.

“Now what should I do to punish you Snapey?” Dark Harry said, smirking at the outrage on the Potion Master’s face as he heard the childish nickname. “Oh,” He said in mock amazement, “You don’t like Snapey? How about Snivellus?”

Now that name set Severus Snape off, and he stood up, and angrily yelled, “Stupefy!”

The Stunner slashed through the air, and struck the demon head on. It had the same effect that throwing a rock at a charging crash of rhinos would do. It simply annoyed him.

“Don’t like Snivellus?” The demon asked faux concernedly, “Does it bring back bad memories? Well, we all have to face our past sometime. Lets see you face yours.”

Snape's eyes widened at the realization at what was about to happen, and was about to fire another spell when darkness surrounded him.

Memories began flashing through his head, lasting for a moment and yet an eternity. His drunken father beating him. James Potter hanging him upside down after the DADA O.W.L. Nearly getting killed by Lupin the werewolf. Voldemort torturing him, one of many times. Becoming shunned by people as a Death Eater, forced to come work with Dumbledore, his talents overlooked by prejudice.

The terrifying, menacing Potions Professor Severus Snape was brought to his knees by his own memories, collapsing then to the floor and shaking with terror as his life began flashing through his mind again and again, the worst parts of it.

And Severus Snape had a lifetime or two of bad memories.

Dark Harry stood above the Potions Master, smiling with vindictive pleasure. The old prick thought he could force me to reveal myself? Not a chance. No one will stand in my way.

Unfortunately, most major movie villains also say these words, and someone always does in fact, stand in their way. Such is the case tonight.

Suddenly, the door burst open, and Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall, Tonks, Ginny, Ron, and Hermione charged into the room, stopping dead in their tracks and staring at the demonic apparition.

Thanks to Harrie, Gyre, Lunatic Pandora1, CharmedMilliE, Night-Owl123, dan, jeff, Maxennce, Saetan, Lady of Masbolle, blade, Szihuoko, FroBoy, harrysmom, Cattatra, DoomIceGaze, japanese-jew, LOSL, Discombobulatedperson, Jews Will Rule The World, jbfritz, VFPC, Stryder, Shaldana Blackwater, My Lil' Angel, Silver Butterfly04, Wren Truesong, lucas13, Shadowed Rains, A-man, Emma Barrows, Akalon, mashimaromadness, dead feather, Hidden Shadows, and Lady Urquenthath for reviewing!

Q&A

Maxennce- It appears you are correct.

Saetan- His core. That's why it was so painful.

Lady of Masbolle- Does the demon come out only in private? Or perhaps there is something else... Dean will definitely help bring out Dark Harry... but not in the way you expect. Finally, Dark Harry actually did do what the guy in Angels and Demons did. He pierced Malfoy's lungs. I wrote that without thinking.

Szihuoko- Nice guess. No werewolves though.

harrysmom- He's more than Harry's anger. As for taking people's souls, that's a critical clue I've given up. Finally, I did say Harry would never kill a friend, didn't I?

Cattatra- Looks like they already did...

DoomIceGaze- Harry got out earlier than Malfoy.

Discombobulatedperson- Yes. Yes I do.

Stryder- Neither do I, neither do I.

Wren Truesong- It was. Was this inevitable too? Anyways, lots of people have been wondering when everyone will get a hint. Now they have. And yes, he does eat souls. They're quite tasty.

lucas13- That's alright if you don't like H/G fics. There's not going to be that much of it, but it is critical. Harry and Ginny are the most important people to the plot.

mashimaromadness- You have good instincts.

dead feather- Soon, perhaps, perhaps are my answers to each question respectively.

Lady Urquantha- Perhaps.

AN: A lot of people wanted Malfoy to live as a squib... but chances are he would have squealed on Dark Harry. (Little wanker.) Well. That was fun! Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 10 Illumination

Suddenly, the door burst open, and Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall, Tonks, Ginny, Ron, and Hermione came into the room, staring at the demonic apparition.

“Well, well, well. Looks like I’ve been caught Snivellus.” ‘Harry’ said, looking at the terrified, shaking Potions Master casually. The demon released the spell, knowing that his full power would be needed. He didn’t seem the least bit perturbed that six powerful wizards, three of them Order members, had run in and found him torturing their comrade (friend was too strong a word).

Everyone looked on him from looks ranging from anger on Dumbledore’s face to sheer shock in Ginny’s face. Dumbledore’s mouth had been open, as if to say something, but now the words had died in his throat.

“Harry... What in the bloody hell happened to you?” Ron asked in fear.

“Your friend Harry is currently unavailable. In fact, I don’t think I can allow him to remain in control any longer.” The darker version of Harry smirked.

“Leave Harry at once!” Dumbledore demanded, his face angered and scared at the same time.

“Bite me, old man.” ‘Harry’ said contemptuously to the Headmaster.

“Stupefy!” Dumbledore cried, and the jet of red light, which contained enough power to put a raging giant into a coma, struck the apparition, and simply faded, absorbed into the strange darkness that surrounded him.

“Really,” The demon drawled, but the contempt was obvious in his voice, “I crap better magic than this.”

“Bugger.” Ron whispered, and no one thought to correct him.



Harry, or whatever kind of twisted, demented, psychotic demon was inside of him just had a good day disrupted. He knew eventually he would be discovered, but he had hoped to kill a few more people, gather some more strength, before the old man figured it out.

"Oh God Harry, what the hell happened to you?" Ginny asked, finally awakening from her stupor.

"God's out at the moment." 'Harry' answered evasively, smirking.

Dumbledore seemed to be discreetly ordering Ron, Hermione, Tonks, Professor McGonagall, and Ginny, the last of them not paying attention. Of course, Harry noticed.

As Dumbledore nodded, and, in unison, they cried out, "STUPEFY!", save Ginny, who was still too shocked to move.

The black haired devil leapt aside easily, with unnatural grace and speed, calling out, "Come on! You can do better than that!"

He landed on the floor, twisting before he landed so that he was facing them, wearing a smirk that would put Draco Malfoy, if not for the fact that he was currently dead, to shame. "Ah, ah, ah." He tutted, "Seven on one isn't fair."

Suddenly, the darkness grew and enshrouded all of them, blinding them to their allies and to Harry like some black fog or perhaps a shield for the demon to use.

"Much better." Harry's voice said, satisfied, as it echoed all around them, as if he was inside the darkness.

Suddenly, some of the shadows seemed to take a form, and, in the unreal, not quite light, but illumination, they could see Harry's familiar, if now twisted visage in front of them.

Dumbledore, as always, reacted first and with the most calm. Or at least first. His voice was laced with anger at the demon who had taken control of a young man as he shouted, "FULMEN!"

Elemental Spells were quite different from any other branch of spellwork, requiring much more power and control, but were far more powerful than the average spell. And the Lightning Spell was one of the strongest. So strong, in fact, that it was semi-restricted by the Ministry.

So it was no shock when several gasps were heard as the spell fired, all save one of them female. The lightning dispelled the Darkness, at least temporarily, revealing the demon before the light became too bright.

With the force to burn straight through solid rock and energy to power several electrical cars for a mile each, the Lightning Spell charged through the air with brutal power, straight for the demonic version Harry, sizzling the very air around it as it slashed through the air. The demon, temporarily blinded by the light of the lightning, was struck in the chest. The air smelled like warm ozone, and the flash blinded everyone, leaving bright spots in their vision as it cleared. They fully expected to be carting a half-burnt body a good ten feet away from the area, or at least a very injured Harry Potter. What they got couldn't have been more different.

The demonic entity had simply stumbled back a few steps, as if taking a powerful, sometimes, and definitely in this case, lethal spell from a powerful wizard was like being punched in the chest. However, the black clothing he had worn was smoldering where it had been struck by lightning, the only true sign of damage on Dark Harry. "You burnt my clothes..." The darker Harry snarled. "Let me show you how I prefer lightning."

He raised his hand, and fired out his own brand of black lightning, which flew towards them, sizzling the air just as the Lightning Spell had. However, where Dumbledore's spell had burnt the air and cut a path, Harry's cleaved it apart with its power and force, leaving the hiss of displaced air in its wake, the air around them getting smoky and more difficult to breathe where it flew.

Dumbledore, taking the situation in stride, countered with a cry of "Terraes Murus!" as he waved his wand in a sweeping arc.

The ground underneath the sweep shot up in a spray of dirt directly in front of the wizards and witches, creating an Earth Wall. The black lightning totally disintegrated the wall of stone and dirt a moment later, leaving the stench of burnt earth around them.

However, the demon was nowhere to be seen.

Dumbledore, knowing that normal senses would fail them, relied instead on an ancient art of magic, the Sight. Opening his eyes to the world of magic, where power was most evident, he searched for the demon, certain that nothing would hide itself from his gaze.

But it was not to be. The darkness covered the demon's aura as well, shielding it, and amplifying his power it seemed. Dumbledore realized with a chill that the darkness was intertwined with the aura of whatever was within Harry, the two nearly indiscernible.

Suddenly, Dumbledore realized exactly what made this demon seemingly impervious to some spells, but not others. "Everyone, stun this demon when I fire my spell," Dumbledore ordered softly, but firmly. Although they seemed to be reluctant, considering the demon's ability to absorb spells it seemed, they followed Dumbledore's orders.

Dumbledore readied himself, and the demon smirked. "Lumos Maximus!" The smirk turned to one of shock as the Blinding Light Spell shined like a second Sun, dispelling the shadows around the demon. He screeched in agony, shielding his face with his arm, trying in vain to escape the light.

"Now!" Dumbledore ordered, and, as one, Tonks, Ron, Hermione, McGonagall, Snape, and Ginny fired Stunners, and, much to their surprise as well as the demon's shock, it connected and sent him flying through the air. The demon's face was frozen in shock as he hurtled through the air, before crashing into the ground, hard.

“What happened?”

Dumbledore didn't answer, instead opening his Sight once more. Now, without the shield of Darkness or the demon's own power to hide it, his aura was plain and visible, naked for all to see. But it was not a sight for the faint of heart, for even Albus Dumbledore was chilled by it. Even unconscious, the demon's aura was dark, a furious storm that would not be tamed, mixed in with a cold, dark, sadistic, calculating feeling that was superior to the best Slytherin mind. And worst of all, it was black, deep black, blacker than the new moon's midnight, darker than the darkest hearts, blacker than the burnt ground where the demon's spell had struck.

A dangerous opponent, to be sure.

“We must question this apparition.” Dumbledore said gravely, and turned toward Hermione. “Miss Granger, would you fetch the Veritaserum in Professor Snape's storeroom?”

Hermione, nodded, and she got the Veritaserum after five minutes, and handed it to the Headmaster. Professor Dumbledore stood over the demon, not wanting to leave him out of his sights for a moment.

Dumbledore quickly poured the Veritaserum down the demon's throat. He then reawakened the demon, which merely glared quietly at them for a moment, before a mask settled over his face. An immovable calm, and they were sure that it was not the Veritaserum that was placating him, but that the demon was forcing himself to remain calm, holding back his rage for another day, a better time.

“Did you kill Draco Malfoy?” Dumbledore asked, once the Veritaserum had taken effect.

“Yeah.” The demon said, closing his eyes at the memory, soaking in it. “You should have heard him scream...”

Hermione, Ginny, Tonks, and even Ron looked repulsed by this statement, while Professor McGonagall and Professor Dumbledore barely held their composure. Only Snape seemed unaffected, but

then again, he had just been through a rough torture session that forced him to relive his worst memories. Not much else could affect him after that.

“Did you also kill Bellatrix Lestrange, Dolores Umbridge, and Cornelius Fudge?” Dumbledore asked after a moment.

“With a song in my heart.” The demon replied, smiling.

“Was there anyone else?”

“Wormtail’s soul was particularly tasty.” The demon replied nonchalantly.

“I see.” Dumbledore said quietly. The demon was far too dangerous. It needed to be contained.

“How long have you been within Harry?” Dumbledore asked.

The demon began laughing, despite the pacifying effects of Veritaserum. “Always.” He answered.

“That’s a lie!” Ron cried out.

“Far from it. I’ve been subconsciously helping your friend for quite some time. Merely for self-preservation, you see.” The demon said, smirking.

“What do you mean?” Dumbledore asked.

“Haven’t any of you noticed?” The demon asked, and after seeing their blank looks, he scoffed, “Really, how have you all survived this long?”

“Just tell us.” McGonagall snapped.

“Harry’s most amazing accomplishments, fighting Voldemort over the Philosopher’s Stone, killing Tom’s memory, defeating all those Dementors, surviving a duel with Voldemort,” The demon drawled, looking bored as hell, “all of that, was through my aid.”

"Your aid?!" Hermione said incredulously.

"My aid, my power, my killer instincts and strength. Not his." Dark Harry said, smirking at them. "I'm that dangerous part of Harry that you all refuse to admit exists."

"How did you come to be?" Dumbledore asked after a moment, seemingly shocked that this demon might be 'the power the Dark Lord knows not', instead of Harry's love. But he dismissed it after a moment. Harry was Harry, this demon was not.

"From what I figure, I was once simply your pathetic friend's darker side." The demon said, looking disgusted that he was once just half of Harry Potter, "But Voldemort changed all that. He left a piece of himself in here, and I took that piece. The two of us might share some talents, but more of it was left to me." The demon drawled, "And all of that pain, anguish, hatred, and bitterness from your friend's life fueled me, and then something else happened that gave me the full power I required."

"What?" Dumbledore asked, his tone and face grave.

"Voldemort possessing your pitiful friend back at the Ministry was the catalyst, along with everything else that happened. He left more of himself, enough of himself to give me full life. The other events merely fueled me further. Although, I was disappointed that Harry could not cast a Cruciatus. Then again, that kind of torture is nothing compared to what I did to Bellatrix." Dark Harry said, laughing.

All save Dumbledore, even Snape seemed shocked that Voldemort had possessed the Boy-Who-Lived, as well as him casting the Cruciatus. Ginny in particular seemed shocked and saddened, which was to be expected, her having been in this position once before.

"We must kill this demon." Snape managed to gasp.

"We cannot kill him, Severus." Dumbledore replied softly, "Not without killing Harry."

"A bonus." Snape snorted.

Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Tonks looked fit to kill the weakened Potions Master, while McGonagall merely glared at him dangerously. "We will contain the demon." Dumbledore continued, as if Snape hadn't suggested anything. "I know a way, but it requires a bit of help."

He turned towards Ginny, who looked bewildered. "Miss Weasley, you owe Harry a life debt, do you not?" Dumbledore asked carefully.

Ginny gulped, pained at why she owed Harry a life debt, but nodded. "What does that have to do with anything?" She asked, too freaked out by Dark Harry's appearance to worry about politeness.

"I know a spell that requires a magical bond to already be formed between to people." Dumbledore said gravely, "It will contain this demon. You owe Harry a life debt, and, if you might be willing, you could help us contain it."

"Doesn't Professor Snape owe Harry a life debt as well?" Hermione asked, not wanting a risky magical spell on one of her friends. Especially one she hadn't heard of. Snape on the other hand... no one would really miss him.

"I'm afraid that the animosity between Severus and Harry might shatter the binding spell." Dumbledore said, a small twinkle in his eye as he looked at his Potions Master, who snorted and looked aside.

"You, Miss Weasley, are his friend. You stand a much better chance of helping the bond contain the demon as well."

"Okay," Ginny said quietly, "If it will help bring Harry back and take this... thing" she spat, "Away."

"Ginny, I'm hurt." The demon drawled, looking at her with a hunger in his eyes. "Don't you like me? I know you used to?" He said mockingly.

Ginny blushed, but was angered. "It wasn't you!" She snarled, "It was the real Harry."

"I am the real Harry." The demon shot back.

"You're lying!" Ron said. "My best mate is not you!"

"Your 'best mate' is nothing but a shell." The demon said, leaning back into his chair. "I'm what he truly is, what hides behind the mask."

"Enough." Dumbledore said forcefully, looking at Dark Harry. "We will do the spell now."

A half hour later, they were ready.

"Are you ready, Miss Weasley?" the Headmaster asked concernedly.

The redhead nodded, swallowing her fear. "It will get Harry back, won't it?" Her voice sounded much more like the scared little girl the Boy-Who-Lived brought out of the Chamber of Secrets than the young woman she was.

"Of course," Dumbledore nodded, his voice kind and firm.

"Getting bored over here!" The demon complained, having been hit with several Full Body Binds and Tonks keeping the Blinding Light spell high above him, keeping his powers nullified. "You guys suck at treating prisoners."

"Shut up you impudent brat!" Snape snarled, about to curse the demon, but Dumbledore stayed his hand.

"You, Minvera, and Nymphadora should stand guard and take Miss Granger and Mister Weasley outside." Dumbledore said, and, albeit reluctantly, Snape nodded with the others.

Ron and Hermione on the other hand, protested violently. "That's my little sister and best mate!" Ron complained bitterly.

"I told you, I'm not your best mate!" Dark Harry shot back.



“Enough. Mister Weasley, you will go.” McGonagall said firmly, fixing him with that patented ‘Do-What-I-Say-Or-It’s-Detention-Till-January’ glare.

Ron nodded unhappily, and he and Hermione were ushered out quickly.

“Let us begin.” With a flick of his wand, Dumbledore summoned the special sacred dagger he had brought down. Its blade was sharp and was rumored to be blessed by one of the Roman Catholic Popes over five hundred years ago. With another flick, the demon was dragged over to him, Tonks still holding up the Blinding Light Spell.

“Jeez, you guys sure know how to make a guy feel welcome.” Dark Harry drawled slowly.

The Headmaster ignored him and motioned Ginny to stand in front of the demon. Brown eyes met black eyes for a moment, and the demon seemed to be willing her to die with his eyes. The redhead shuddered and looked away.

“Hold out your hand.” Dumbledore commanded, at Ginny raised her hand out to the demon, as if she wished to shake its hand.

“I’d shake back, but I’m a bit tied up at the moment.” The demon smirked, but Dumbledore flicked his wand again, and the demon was raised into the air.

Dumbledore swallowed. There was only one way to keep this demon pacified but complete the ritual. It required a mixing of blood and an established magical link between the two. It was designed to keep a possessed person under pacification until the presence could be exorcised.

“Severus, hand me some of that Calming Draught, would you?” Dumbledore asked jovially. The dour man handed him the vial, and Dumbledore poured that liquid down the demon’s mouth. There was enough in that vial to keep a rampaging hippogriff docile for two hours.

“Finite Incantatem.” The demon relaxed, but the Calming Draught seemed to be affecting him greatly. “Dominatio Ulna!” Dumbledore roared, a jet of gray light flying out of his wand and striking the demon’s arm.

Tonks and McGonagall damn near fainted at hearing the spell name. This seemed to be the night where Albus Dumbledore was pulling out all the stops, disregarding any spell necessary. In this case, the Control Curse allowed the caster to control one limb of the victim, like a more centralized, more difficult to fight Imperius Curse.

Another restricted spell from the Ministry. “I know,” Dumbledore whispered softly, but enough so that they could hear him, “But I have no other option.”

He forced Dark Harry’s arm to rise up, until the fingertips brushed that of Ginny’s hand, who shuddered at the contact. “Hold your arm steady.” Dumbledore ordered the redhead, before coming down with the knife in a slash, right down Ginny’s right palm, causing a slightly deep gash.

She winced in pain, but had been informed about this before hand. Dumbledore then slashed the demon’s left hand in the same area, and blood began pouring from both their palms, like red rain on the floor.

Ginny knew what she had to do now. Grasping the demon’s hand, their blood began mixing already, causing Ginny to wince in pain and shudder in horror.

“Blood of the indebted and the debtor, mix together. Covenant made in blood, keep the dark presence within this being at bay, blood of two, blood of debt. Let this bond hold the presence within at bay, uniting the strength of these two. Let their bond, their feelings, their relationship hold this demon.” Dumbledore intoned. He continued to chant this phrase again and again as the blood continued to mix and fall to the floor.

As the binding spell neared completion, the demon still didn’t look the least bit perturbed “You know, the longer I’m held by this spell, the

longer I'll keep you alive." Demon Harry said with the normal diabolical calm he possessed. As if somehow, he knew, deep down, he would get his revenge on all of them. And besides, it was far scarier to be calm and wait for your time, the demon had learned, than rage and storm and attack when the mood strikes.

After all, revenge is a dish best served cold, and this demon preferred his frozen.

"Pact of blood, I beseech you!" Dumbledore commanded, and then there was a brilliant flash of light, as if the sun had descended into the dark dungeons, and then it faded slowly, leaving Ginny sprawled on the floor and the other half of the bond barely holding himself against the wall.

And with that last chilling message and flash of light, the demon was gone, held back by Ancient Magic, and only Harry James Potter remained. For now, at least.

Thanks to Night-Owl123, Harrie, Pleione, DoomIceGaze, VFPC, OldNick, Hunter101, TGB, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Black Roses, japanese-jew, brilliant-author16, David M. Potter, CharmedMilliE, Evil Penguin Slayer, jbfritz, Citan, MMockler4Tonks, Stryder, harrysmom, Tanydwr, csferosha, RealityIntrovert, Emma Barrows, HPfan, Starfire Greenleaf, Cattatra, A-man, skittles-07, Lady of Masbolle, ginnym, FroBoy, Lunatic Pandora1, Tondo-the-half-elf, Lady Urquenth, Discombobulatedperson, jasmine s., eliteshadow, NightShadow135, Fire Gazer, sniffles4padfoot, jen, HPbabe143, Sapphire Phoenix, and Earth Dragon for reviewing!

Q&A

Harrie- Maybe... (sly smile)

Hunter101- Harry was too confused.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- How did you know?

japanese-jew- That would be telling.

Citan- There's Harry's Madness by SilverLocke

Tanywdr- I suppose the whole getting angry thing works for the Hulk.

Cattatra- Its not Voldemort, but perchance the Heir of Slytherin has something to do with it.

Lady of Masbolle- Dean summon a demon? (Scratches head) I don't see how... As you can see, they outsmarted him. But will they get lucky if he should rise again?

ginnym- I didn't.

Lunatic Pandora1- I did say Harry wouldn't attack his friends, didn't I?

Tondo-the-half-elf- Or there's option 3.

jasmine s- Thanks for the suggestion, but I've got one already. Thanks anyway!

sniffles4padfoot- Can't explain how it came to be, or its powers. That comes up later.

Sapphire Phoenix- Secret.

AN: I noticed that when Harry does powerful things, it seems to be when it is dark, or at least without light. Philosopher's Stone- Underground, probably at night. Chamber of Secrets- Underground, at night. Fighting off the Dementors- At night. Dueling Voldemort- At night. Just my own little twisted extrapolation of that. Tiny tributes to Angel and other of my favorite shows throughout my stories. I like to throw in little quotes and echoes of different things, to see if you can catch them in my stories. I told you that the Ginny/Harry ship would be important. And it is, see! Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 11 Papercut

Now that the demon had been sealed, they were faced with a difficult decision.

Should they tell Harry about what kind of evil lived within him? Could they tell Harry that he was responsible for a string of brutal tortures and murders, that he held an evil on par with the Dark Lord inside his soul?

All the events from Sirius' death to this moment, along with such a revelation, might drive Harry off the deep end. And that was not an option. Losing Harry to himself, to that blank Stygian abyss of his depression that he had only just escaped, could not be allowed.

But they had to tell Harry. There was no other choice.

The demon could escape otherwise, could kill and torture and slaughter and murder relentlessly. He would make good on his vow.

And the memory of that vow still lay fresh in their minds, an ever-haunting melody of a promise, not a threat.

In the end, they all told Harry (except Snape) the next day, when he awoke. Luckily, it was a weekend.

He didn't take it too well. First there was the screaming, then the violence, then the lashing out, then the swearing (Ron was quite impressed with it), then finally the silence, the worst part. Harry just stopped moving, sat down on the bed, and said one word.

"Leave."

It was so full of absence, so completely incomplete, so lifeless, so toneless, that they left quickly, because it told them all one thing.

Harry hadn't been driven off the deep end. He'd been blasted in, and sealed shut in the black abyss.

So they left, all but one feeling useless.

That night, a solitary figure in Harry's invisibility cloak snuck into the Hospital Wing carefully, before taking it off and planting herself next to Harry, who was sitting up in his bed, looking unable to sleep.

For what seemed like hours, maybe years, maybe lifetimes, Ginny Weasley sat next to Harry, waiting patiently. She could feel, somehow, that he was hurting, feeling violated and used and broken and disgusting. Like she felt after the diary.

So she sat, until she could somehow detect that Harry was ready to speak.

"Harry?" Ginny asked, breaking the silence.

"I feel like I'm going nutters, Gin. I keep checking over my shoulder, feeling paranoid but I can't help myself. He's always there, watching for me, watching when I make a move, when I close my eyes, I feel him, waiting inside." Harry whispered brokenly, revealing just how truly scared of whatever was inside of him he was.

I know you're scared of me Harry. I know, and I feed off of it, the demon whispered softly, causing Harry to shiver unconsciously

"Oh... Harry..." Ginny whispered compassionately. Somehow, she could actually feel his sorrow, his fear, his pain. Was this the bond?

"I feel like its always dark, like I'm always on the edge. Its like a bloody whirlwind in my head, I can't stop hearing him, can't stop hearing the voice from within." Harry said quietly, brokenly, putting his head in his hands. "He's always there, just at the back of my mind, waiting in the darkest part of me.

"For the love of Merlin," Harry cried out, jerking his head up, "I can't even close my eyes for too long without thinking he's there!"

"Harry, its okay. I felt like that, after Tom possessed me. I felt like I couldn't trust myself, like everything was cold and numb and dark. But I got through it, and so will you." Ginny touched Harry's arm, trying to reassure him.

"I don't know Gin. I don't know if I can get through this. I could have stopped those deaths." Harry rasped.

Ginny shook her head, grasping his hand. "No you couldn't have, Harry."

But Harry shook his head violently in response. "I knew, deep down. And when Bellatrix died, just before that, I felt something, a darkness, numbness creeping right underneath my own skin..." Harry whispered, rubbing his arm furiously, as if to fight off the numbness he remembered.

"You didn't Harry." Ginny whispered, feeling his despair trying to engulf her.

"I'm scared Ginny." Harry managed to whisper, despite his mind's protests not to reveal weakness, "I'm scared he'll kill all of you."

"He won't Harry. Not as long as the bond holds him back." Ginny assured him, patting his hand reassuringly.

"Th-Thanks... Gin." Harry whispered, feeling the emotional fatigue settling over him, along with a wave of warmth alien to him, but comforting nonetheless. But still, the shadows in every corner continued to haunt and mock him.

"You must be tired. I'll let you rest." Ginny said, smiling at him, moving to get up.

"No!" Harry cried out, grabbing her wrist, before pulling back. "Sorry... but... maybe... if its not too much trouble... you could..." Harry swallowed. Was it really that hard? "Stay?"

Ginny seemed taken aback, and Harry began babbling apologies, but she smiled and shushed him. "Sure Harry."

Comfortable heat surged through both of them; something that felt so right that words soiled it.

“You don’t have to...” Harry began, but Ginny cut him off.

“You need it. I’ll stay as long as you need. Sleep.” She ordered firmly, but her brown eyes were concerned.

“Thanks... Ginny...” Harry whispered, before being pulled into the land of dreams, but also nightmares.

It was... almost beyond description. As if words would mitigate the beauty of this place.

The sun shined down on Harry, and although the sun had shined many a day before this, something about this sunlight seemed surreal. The vivacious trees whispered with the gentle wind, the bountiful land had an aura of tranquility, and the grass was soft and silky, like naturally growing silk sheets on the soft brown earth.

Silence and peace reigned supreme, and Harry found his cares drifting away in the summer-like breeze that tickled his nose, awakened his senses.

He felt more alive than he had ever been, feeling, really feeling, not hiding behind the shell developed at the Dursleys and refined through years of hardship, but actually letting himself be who he really was, be himself.

Paradise.

Harry walked tentatively, wondering where he was, what was going on. He walked as one might walk in front of the holiest relic of their religion, cautiously and respectfully, with a tinge of disbelief at actually being here.

And then an angel appeared.

Harry wanted to close his eyes and fall to his knees, unworthy to be in the presence of this beautiful creature. But he found he could not tear his gaze from the enchanting sight before him.

The angel was petite, with soft curves and long legs, with big brown eyes that sparkled with mischief, delight, and happiness, clad in a



white sundress that seemed surreal, an angelic garb for an angel. And crowning the angel was a fiery halo of crimson hair.

“Ginny...” Harry whispered.

Ginny Weasley smiled at him, her smile fulfilling Harry in a way that filled that void in his heart that had grown and widened with every loss, every hardship. She said nothing, but embraced Harry in her arms, the comfort of a mother, a friend, and a lover all in one motion.

Harry let himself be held by this creature, this seraph, known as Ginny Weasley. He found an upsurge, a tidal wave of warmth flood his senses, his mind, his very soul. Was it love?

Love seemed too weak a word to describe what he was feeling, but it would have to do. He felt his heart, his soul beating in unison with Ginny, and their embrace seemed to transfer these feelings. This love.

And he couldn't hold it in within himself. He had to say it. Like a geyser, the words tumbled out of Harry Potter's mouth for the first time. “I love you.”

Paradise.

Then paradise was lost.

Behind Harry, his shadow stretched out, until it was exactly the same proportions as him. Harry and Ginny didn't notice anything, not until it was too late. The shadow stood up, smirking viciously, staring down at the two of them.

Harry was ripped from Ginny's grasp violently and viciously, with a mocking, cold laughter surrounding him and freezing the warmth that had once flooded his veins.

The wind became violent and harsh, the trees were gone, and all that was left was an inky darkness that surrounded Harry Potter.

His angel and his paradise were gone.

“You love her... well, that’s an interesting development.”

Harry spun around to face the speaker, the one who took his paradise.

And he gasped in horror.

It was himself. The demon that he had seen once before, in his nightmares, the demon that attacked Malfoy, Snape, and others. He stood, a demon from Hell, clothed in black almost indistinguishable from the darkness around them, his eyes matching the darkness, a smirk on his face.

“You... you.” Harry managed, stumbling backwards.

“You love her. Your love will kill her now.” The darker version of Harry laughed. “I’ll take her from you, or I’ll drive her from you. Either way, she will die, or you will lose her. I win.”

“I won’t let you.” Harry whispered, clenching his fists in anger.

“You can’t stop me.”

“I can try.” Harry said confidently, bravado ringing within him.

“You can, but you will fail, just like you failed to save Cedric and Sirius.” The demon taunted.

“BASTARD!” Harry roared, lunging, but the demon sidestepped and laughed amusedly.

“Perhaps I should show you a vision of what will come.” The demon muttered, and snapped his fingers.

“Help me Harry!”

Harry spun around, to see Ginny surrounded in fire, his angel on the verge of death. “No!” Harry cried out, but he couldn’t move.

“You can’t save her from me Harry. You can’t save her from yourself.”  
The demon smiled viciously.

Ginny was engulfed in fire, and his angel was lost to the darkness.

“No...” Harry whispered brokenly, falling to his knees, sobs wracking his body.

“In the end,” The demon lectured, “I will prevail. I am the Darkness. I am You.” He bent down to look into Harry’s eyes, abyss meeting light.

“And just like you, I always win.”

As before, Darkness engulfed Harry, as did the mocking laughter of his darker half...

And in the Hospital Wing of Hogwarts, Harry James Potter awoke in horror to love and the consequences of his heart.

The demon laid silently, a Titan within the Tartarus of his mind, waiting for his chance.

Ginny lay sleeping in a chair next to him, invisibility cloak on, but Harry could feel her, somehow. Her presence was the sweetest torture imaginable. To know that the girl, nay, woman you loved was so close, yet to touch her would be her demise.

So Harry just watched her, making a vow in his mind to the silent demon that bore witness to the oath.

Knowing that the demon, that Voldemort would use Ginny to bait him as with Sirius, Harry swore that very night that he would not love Ginny Weasley. That love could not be the thing he possessed. That he would avoid Ginny, he would avoid all forms of love from friendship to true love.

Those he loved would know only death otherwise.

The demon spoke once, and Harry could feel a soft grin hidden in the shadows of his soul. I win.

And Harry knew the demon had won. Knew it intimately but knew that the demon had to win the battle so that Harry would not lose any more, so that there would be no more casualties of war. And so it was that in this dark moment in the silent night, Harry James Potter lost the first of many battles with the darkness of his soul.

The tears followed soon after, like salty rain from an emerald sky, drops of liquid sorrow in the dead night.

Thanks to Sapphire Phoenix, brilliant-author16, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Night-Owl123, CharmedMilliE, Treck, A-man, Pleione, japanese-jew, Hunter101, Ice-Phoenix-Tears, Samurai Demon-God Sekikage, Gyre, PinkytheSnowman, RealityIntrovert, jbfritz, Lady of Masballe, Fire Gazer, BladeofUltio, harrysmom, nesy-poo-2008, HPbabe143, Cattatra, PhoenixFawkes05, Akua, YamiClara, Rift120, Tanydwr, spike blade, TouthinisKing, corvus-the-wizzy, TopQuark, Maxennce, Ginny M, mashimaromadness, Julie Long, HPfan, and dementorchic for reviewing!

## Q&A

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- I personally liked those lines. But hey, there will be plenty more opportunities for the demon. Now, as for the darkness not overpowering the light, the bond has some... weaknesses that I've hinted at. Darkness will prevail!

japanese-jew- One demon per person.

Hunter101- I've never heard of the Ministry detecting Dark Magic before.

Samurai Demon-God Sekikage- Excellent theories, and for a misread second, I almost thought you had it. But no, Harry (not the demon) is a real person. Well... maybe not a person in the way we all are... (Try to figure that one out. I suppose one clue should help, perhaps. The saying goes, in every darkness...)

PinkytheSnowman- Yes, but don't count Harry out just yet.

Lady of Masbolle- Just like I said above, one demon per person, one person per demon. Now, the shell thing is a bit of a debate, but I can say that Harry is not just a shell, or a demon. There's stuff that can only be explained by one person in this story, and well... you can't really expect ol' Tom to waltz into Hogwarts to tell people stuff now can you! Or maybe you can...

BladeofUltio- Definitely Dark Harry that stays dark. I thought about the other path, but this way is more fun!

harrysmom- Very good! You're one of the few people who gets it! Congrats!

Cattatra- The demon definitely, as you can see, does not like Harry. He was merely using that anger as a method of coming out of the shadows. Why didn't he just do that before... well, even Dark Harry is afraid of someone. And it isn't Tom or Albus.

Akua- No offense taken. I know there's people reading this for just the Dark Harry, and it's okay if you don't like Ginny. As for her death...

Rift120- Still not getting it. But no, there's just Harry and the Demon.

Tanydwr- Harry's true strengths? My, my, someone's beginning to think like me. Now, when the demon returns, you'll probably still like him, but also hate him. Evil people tend to make people feel both ways.

corvus-the-wizzy- Perhaps sooner...

Maxennce- Well, not everyone who deserves retribution will have it. But they will have it, to be sure. This should get a good message out. Though we cheer the demon now... we might not cheer when his intentions and motives are clear.

mashimaromadness- (Bows) Thank you, thank you. Sorry for jamming up your inbox! Now, when did I talk about elves?

dementorchic- Well, the demon has powers from Darkness. Maybe there are other powers... other forces at work.

AN: Sorry for the delay, my angst center was off from the holidays.  
Thanks for reading and please review!

## Chapter 12 The Fine Line

Harry Potter descended down to breakfast the next morning, dreading, despite Ginny's assurances the day before that nothing had changed, the reaction of several people, especially Snape. Actually, namely Snape.

If Snape hated him before, what about now, after some evil psycho version of himself tortured him?

You know he deserved it, that dark voice Harry finally associated with his evil half hissed softly.

He didn't. Harry countered firmly.

Oh that's right, the demon hissed again, you empathize with him because your dad was just like Dudley. Maybe once I'm done with your friends, I'll pay a little visit to our... family.

Despite everything, Harry was horrified to feel a certain sense of satisfaction at that thought, and he didn't know who it came from. The demon or himself. The lines between the two of them blurred so many times now, it seemed.

Resolving himself to avoid all people, especially a certain redhead, Harry steeled himself for what would be the longest, most arduous week of his life.

Harry wanted to groan out in frustration. Why did whatever powers ruled this universe hate him so much! All he wanted was to avoid his friends, make sure Snape did not try to kill him, and get through the week without seeing Ginny. And it worked fairly well, as Snape pretty much avoided looking at Harry, and when he did, there was a shiver of fear in the Potion Master's eyes, which didn't give him the pleasure the demon had every time he saw it, instead scaring him. Severus Snape was a man who faced Voldemort's tortures on a regular basis, but was now deathly afraid of what lived within Harry.

With good reason, you know, his darker half mused cheerfully.

That was another problem. The demon within was always talking, always making a comment on different things, sometimes with ideas of torture and pain that made Harry shiver with fear for those subjects of his talks. The dark presence kept making remarks all throughout the day, some sarcastic, some dangerous, and some that caused anger to rise within Harry. But he could do nothing.

As for his friends, they avoided him too, thinking he needed space and trying to deal with their own fears of the demon within. There was just one problem. Ginny kept seeking him out and knowing somehow that something was wrong. Every time. He could not escape her.

See Harry, doesn't love suck? You try and try to find it, then the moment you get it, you can't have it. Life's a bitch, ain't it? Dark Harry laughed at his own commentary.

And each time she knew exactly what was wrong, and Harry knew exactly what she would say and feel about his self-imposed isolation.

Obviously, Dumbledore's bond had some... unexpected consequences. When Harry confronted Dumbledore about this two days before, the Headmaster replied that feelings were needed to keep the bond stabilized, as that was a critical part of most Ancient magics.

Feelings, the demon snorted amusedly when Dumbledore said it.

Unfortunately, it also gave both Harry and Ginny the ability to find the other. Unfortunately in the way that Ginny always tracked him down, just like today, in one of Harry's secluded brooding areas.

"Harry! What the bloody hell is wrong with you! I already told you no one blames you for what happened!" Ginny snarled angrily.

"Would you just leave me alone! I'd like to process this myself, so just sod off for Merlin's sake!" Harry shot back caustically.

You're just a hit with the ladies, aren't you? His dark half commented sardonically.



Would do me a favor and shut the hell up! Harry roared internally.

No can do sport. This is all the entertainment I have left, Dark Harry responded cheerfully.

“Fine! Just be by yourself then you idiot! Don’t come crying to me when you find yourself all alone!” Ginny hissed angrily, and Harry got out of his chair and turned quickly, stalking off.

And this is the girl you love, the demon remarked, You sure know how to pick em sport.

Harry had nothing to say to that remark, instead continuing his quest to find someplace to think and be alone. Except he was never able to find that place. Unknowingly though, this time, there was another person watching him.

From the shadows, Dean Thomas watched in jealousy as Harry Potter stalked away, watched intently by his girlfriend Ginny Weasley. Over the past week, Harry had been moody and distant as usual, but Ginny would always disappear and then all of a sudden there were blazing rows between Ginny and Harry, just like before. And both Ginny and Harry kept glancing at each other, and always seemed to know what the other was thinking for some odd reason...

It seemed like Ginny was Harry’s boyfriend, and not Dean.

The idea that Ginny was cheating on him with Harry always stalked in his mind, in the shadows. He had always been a bit insecure on that front, what with her huge crush on him before and the closeness that she shared with him, especially now. Up until this week however, his jealousy and insecurity hadn’t been this bad.

Finally, Dean decided to confront Ginny tomorrow, to see if she was just stringing him along or if Harry was just bothering her.

In a different set of shadows, this time of the mind, the demon allowed himself a small grin of triumph and anticipation of freedom. It was all moving according to plan.

The next day, Dean decided to quietly approach Ginny in the common room. Although something in him told him it might not be smart to confront her with Harry not too far away, something else insisted he do it now. She was sitting alone, studying a Potions textbook, but silently fuming and occasionally glaring at the Boy-Who-Lived.

As he approached, he had no idea of where this conversation would lead to, or the consequences of his actions... or the horror that would follow.

"Ginny? I need to talk to you." Dean said quietly to the redhead.

The youngest Weasley turned her head up startled, and she gave Dean a tired, obviously forced smile. "Can it wait? I'm kind of—"

"Now." He said brusquely.

Ginny, startled by his sharpness, dropped the book and turned her eyes curiously at him. "Is this one of those- 'I'm-sorry-I-really-like-you-but-we-should-just-be-friends' speeches?" She asked, half-jokingly, half serious.

"You would like that, wouldn't you?" He sneered, startled at his own actions. What was going on?

"And just what the bloody hell is that supposed to mean?" Ginny shot back, disturbed by Dean's tone of voice. Sure she hadn't been around for him in a while, but it was her O.W.L. year...

"You know. So you can hang around with your other boyfriend? Or are you just stringing him along, like me? No wait, that's just how you treat me?" Dean's sneer grew to match Snape's, and the venom in his voice would have made a Basilisk seem harmless. But this wasn't at all how he wanted to approach this... what was going on?

"What the Hell are you talking about!" Ginny said indignantly, standing up quickly to look him in the eye. Now the couple were

drawing the attention of all the Gryffindors, but they had enough common sense to stay out of Ginny's ire.

"Oh don't give me this shit! You're constantly hanging around bloody Harry Potter instead of me, like he's your boyfriend and not me!" Dean roared, before his voice dropped to a deadly hiss. "How far have you gotten with him, you little slut!" Dean wanted to take the words back. There was something making his emotions out of control, something that was making him say words that he didn't really believe...

Ginny's mouth dropped open, and her eyes widened. Before Harry, Ron, anyone could defend Ginny, she did the first thing that came to mind.

She punched Dean right in the face.

The Gryffindor went flying backwards, landing with a hard thump against the wall. Glaring at Ginny, he staggered away with his nose bleeding badly.

From the corner of the room, Harry moved to help Ginny and apologize for causing her this trouble, but his darker half's comment nearly stopped him. Come on man, you totally wanted that girl! I don't see why, when you could be doing some other tart, but hell, to each his own.

I didn't want them to break up! I don't want to be with Ginny! Harry shot back as he stepped closer.

Of course you do... you're just afraid I'll kill her, or Tom will. Don't worry... I'll kill Tom first if I have my way. We can have a little fun with her... who knows, maybe I'll even let you have a turn, if you're a good boy.

Harry ignored the voice, but couldn't ignore the idea that maybe, just maybe, he really did want Ginny and Dean to break up.

As she stood in the middle of the common room, shocked beyond belief, Ginny felt ire rise at Dean for not trusting her, at Harry for

invoking feelings that were unwelcome, at this Merlin damned bond that bound the two of them together, making her want to help Harry get out of his funk! Why did it have to be her! Damn it all! Why her! Would she keep paying for her mistake with Tom Riddle's diary forever! Was this some cruel joke that the universe thought was funny! Was there some higher power that hated her for some reason!

She could hear Harry coming up behind her, probably to apologize, which only incensed her further, her feelings out of control for some odd reason...

"Damn you Harry! Damn you! Damn you, damn that stupid bond Dumbledore put on us! Damn it all!" Ginny raged as she turned around, eyes full of anger and hatred which echoed her soul, hating Harry with all her might because Dean's words struck chords and struck deep within her heart, because hate was so much less painful than love, because she hated Harry in the darkest part of her heart for making her feel this way. Hating him because she loved him.

After all, there is such a fine line between love and hate.

Although she could feel Harry's pain at her words, it only made her angrier. What right did he have to feel that way, when she cried herself over him so many times! What right did he have to feel compassion for her, when she loved him her whole life!

Harry stumbled back, wincing at each angry word from Ginny's mouth, feeling her rage, her anger, and her hatred towards him through the bond, which broke his heart. He felt as though it would break, like a fragile glass ornament caught in a violent whirlwind, with no possible defense, no defense, not one thing separating his heart from utter oblivion.

"I hate you Harry Potter!"

As if to punctuate this statement, Harry felt the rippling anger and hatred through their bond, like an earthquake or the hand of the Almighty God himself about to strike upon a an ancient and fragile glass pyramid that was built with the shoddiest, worst materials

possible. The glass, their bond, shattered at that moment, and Harry felt himself succumbing to darkness, darkness of the heart...

As Ginny began to move into the full-fledged onslaught of every bitter and angry feeling held within her dark corners of her heart, her soul, her tirade was interrupted. Quite forcefully.

It was akin to the rising of something from the depths of an abyss, an angry and vengeful god rising to destroy everything in its path.

The chairs, tables, and other assorted furniture of the Gryffindor common room suddenly exploded from around Harry as if an invisible and incredibly powerful explosion had just unleashed itself from the Boy-Who-Lived like a rising tornado whose eye was centered on the seemingly oblivious Harry Potter. And it didn't stop there.

Ginny felt it too, as did everyone else in the common room, each of who were thrown bodily through the air, that same wave that had blasted away the furniture tossing them like rag dolls caught in a cyclone. She felt a sharp pain in her back as she was flung against the wall, and she fell to her knees, struggling to put her head up to look at the source, the eye of the storm.

The eye in question, Harry James Potter, had his head up at the moment, eyes heavenward, and his features impossible to tell. Around him, the air was actually visible, whipping and twisting and churning violently, as if the very air shook with violent fear of the man it surrounded, as if he was some incomprehensible force that would destroy nature itself, disrupt the balance and harmony that nature held. As if his mere presence was terrible enough that the wind itself shook with fear, that the earth trembled with every breath at what this one wizard, this one person, this one man, could do.

The wind seemed a reflection of the man in the center, violent, angry, furious, unyielding, untamable, and powerful.

After a few more moments, his head quickly fell down, as if his neck no longer supported his head. His head was down now, his chin at his chest, his long, shaggy black hair obscuring his face like a dark

curtain that tried, but held no shield for the world from the horror that was to come.

Around them, the room grew colder and darker, as if a storm was setting in. A storm where there was no shelter, nothing protecting anyone from its undiluted fury. A fury strong enough to take the world and send it to ashes with its force and fiery power.

And then, the most unexpected thing happened.

Harry began laughing.

Thanks to CharmedMilliE, Gyre, brilliant-author16, japanese-jew, Hunter101, Quillian, harrysmom, VFPC, Tanydwr, RealityIntrovert, David M. Potter, Maxennce, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, PinkyTheSnowman, FroBoy, QueenWeasel, Samurai Demon-God Sekikage, Emma Barrows, HedwigPig, BladeofUltio, Lady of Masbolle, Ginny M, mashimaromadness, Pleione, YamiClara, HPbabe143, spike blade, Queen Weasel, Evil Penguin Slayer, Rift120, CuRiOuSiTy KiLIEd ThE rAt, Tondo-the-half-elf, ThrainTalonWater, Moonlight Flowers, Mark Turnlach, Talix, and Garnet Runestar for reviewing!

## Q&A

Hunter101- True, but Harry doesn't know that yet.

harrysmom- Ginny having a power that can help/save Harry? A bit too cliché, don't you think?

Tanydwr- Yes, you should be. And yes, Harry does get strength from having people who care for him, who would fight and die for him. But Harry knows that hurts too, so he's pushing them away. A mistake, and one that just might be too costly...

David M. Potter- Love conquers all? Pah, I'm a romantic, not a fluff writer.

Maxennce- Nice analysis, and you've hit the nail on the head. But Harry isn't a savior... yet.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- Thanks!

PinkyTheSnowman- Thanks. And yes, you were right. There's going to be more angst and death than you can shake a stick at. (Why do people say that, anyway) As for who is going to die... lets just say that I'm preparing my computer for flames. BWAHAHAHAH!

Samurai Demon-God Sekikage- I should have made this clear earlier. The "demon" references are NOT literal. And as nice as your idea about the Killing Curse is, my version is it KILLS people, by taking their soul. No summoning demons. Now, I know you're confused by why the "demon" (remember, there are no REAL demons here, just metaphorical ones) hasn't come out before. Here's a tip. Re-read Chapter 10, when the demon is under Veritaserum, and the summary of the whole story. It wasn't awake UNTIL after Harry got possessed by Tom. I'll forgive the slightly arrogant remark at the end, and give you this one piece of advice. Don't assume anything about any of my stories. There's always one more twist. And this story was made with MY theory in mind. So... let's keep those remarks to yourself, it makes you sound a bit pompous, okay?

Lady of Masbolle- Voldemort vs. Dark Harry... highly anticipated, at least by me. And by that time in the story, you won't know who to root for! As for what happens if the demon is ever gone... who says it can be taken out? (On a side note: waltzing in to Bohemian Rhapsody?)

mashimaromadness- Thanks for the alert, that was a typo. I know the feeling about having nothing to do over vacation... at least until Christmas hit!

Queen Weasel- Trying to understand me and my cryptic comments does that to people. There are moments when Harry will be... how shall we say... "inside" the demon, but its really more like he's gone to sleep and the demon's taken over.

Rift120- Dang... that sounds cool! It kind of reminds me of this story the way you phrase it... except that there's little chance of Harry

becoming a whole person again, and there's really only two people in there. Harry and Dark Harry.

Moonlight Flowers- I'm glad I could be of service. An angsty Dark Harry isn't nearly as fun as a sadistic monster.

Mark Turnlach- You're right, of course. It was tough writing this chapter... mainly cause I was lacking any sadistic torturing. Oh well... plenty of that to come.

AN: Guess whose back... All that anger towards Ginny's making me wince... I'm going to go and cheer myself up by blasting some alien scum in Halo. Thanks for reading and please review!



## Chapter 13 Black Day

And then, the most unexpected thing happened.

Harry began laughing.

It was a dark, cold laugh with an ethereal quality and the ability to steal the very warmth from everyone around him, right from their souls. A feeling of helplessness, of numbness, of despair settled on each and every one of their minds, hearts, and very souls, as if three hundred Dementors had arrived on the scene.

His head raised itself, and horrified gasps were heard all around.

His eyes were a dank Stygian abyss, with an infinite depth to them that threatened to swallow them whole if they stared too long, horrifyingly familiar to three of the Gryffindors, who barely managed to keep themselves together as they looked at him.

His features were warped somehow, though still Harry. They carried an unfeeling undercurrent of malice, which was barely restrained behind the smirk on his face, as if he was suppressing a dangerous rage barely, holding his calm facade like a dam holding back an ocean of power, ready to burst at any moment. All around him, the area seemed tainted by his dark presence.

The wind began to die down, as if beaten by the man's presence.

He cracked his neck, feeling the sharp snaps of bone on bone and hearing them, savoring them, and the smirk grew.

"I'm back..." Dark Harry said in a singsong voice.

"Oh Merlin, we're in trouble..." Ron whispered.

"Sharp as always, aren't you, Ron?" 'Harry' said snidely, turning the abyss of his eyes onto the redhead.

"What the bloody hell is going on!" Dean cried out fearfully.

“Nothing really. I’m just going to kill you all.” The demon replied nonchalantly, his tone and mannerisms easily allowing people to believe he would kill them, without even changing that confident, calm, collected smirk.

Jaws dropped. This was not Harry Potter.

“Bring Harry back!” Ginny managed to shout, shocking herself as well as everyone else. She stood up shakily, glaring at the demon.

“But Miss Weasley, I could have sworn you said just a moment ago you hated Mister Potter.” Dark Harry grinned, piercing her with his eyes. “You want you’re punching bag back?”

“I... I didn’t mean it!” Ginny shrieked desperately, “I swear I didn’t mean it!”

“Oh but you did,” The darker Harry said, smirk growing even bigger, “In the deepest, darkest corner of your heart, you did. You hated him for never noticing you, for being too damn nice but not nice enough to give you the time of day, for saving your life then never saying anything else, never talking, speaking, or noticing you.” He paused for a moment, seeing the effect it had on the youngest Weasley. “You hate him.”

“I DON’T!” Ginny yelled, firing a Disarming Charm at the demon, forgetting in her anger and shame that spells never worked on this demon for some reason. Shame at hating Harry, anger that the demon revealed that to everyone.

He batted the bright red light aside easily, continuing his verbal assault. “You do, and you hate yourself for hating him. That’s the truth.” Dark Harry declared.

Ginny quailed, and fell to her knees. It was true.

“But, all this conversation is making me hungry. You first years,” The demon said dispassionately, turning towards the younger children

who shuddered under his gaze, "Look like you could tide me over. Perhaps as an appetizer."

One little girl screamed and tried to run, but the darkness simply pushed her back. Hermione remembered what Professor Dumbledore had done, and yelled out, "Lumos Maximus!"

However, her spell was not nearly as bright as Dumbledore's, evidenced by only momentary loss of control the demon had before he smothered her spell. "Sorry, but it looks like you don't have what it takes to stop me." 'Harry' uttered contemptuously, but still in the same unruffled voice as before.

"We'll find a way!"

The demon turned back towards Ginny, who had risen to her feet again, glaring at him. "You can stop with the mind games. We will find a way to put you back in your place." Ginny snarled.

The black haired devil raised an amused eyebrow. "Will you now? Well, it seems that you are going to be more fun than I thought." The demon looked at her in an almost leering way that made Ginny feel very uncomfortable. "I'll have fun breaking you, so I'll save you for last, so you can watch me slaughter your friends and family, before I kill you."

"Leave her alone!" Ron yelled, leaping for the demon.

Dark Harry simply stepped aside as Ron crashed to the floor. "You Weasleys. You seem to have a fire in you." The demon observed in the same unperturbed tone, kicking Ron, who cried out in pain, "I'll enjoy putting it out. I'll watch you suffer before I kill you. And your precious sister will be last, without any of her big brothers to help."

"RON!" Hermione yelled, firing off a Force Spell that the demon sidestepped, glancing nonchalantly at the dent in the wall.

"Really, you Gryffindors don't know when to just GIVE UP!" The demon swung his hand out in a horizontal arc, and Hermione was thrown into the wall bodily.

Many gasped in horror, and Ginny rushed over to help her friend back up, but Hermione determinedly pushed Ginny away and stood defiantly.

"How-how did you escape?" Hermione stuttered, wiping a bit of blood from her mouth.

The demon gave an amused smile. "Well, I suppose I'll take last requests..." He looked over at Ginny, who shivered, and leered. "But I hope you don't waste yours on a question."

Ignoring the demon's innuendos at Ginny, Hermione asked again.

"Well, you see kiddies, hatred is a very strong thing, just like love. Twins you see, so close to one another that they mix and you can't tell which is which. Ginny's hatred, you see, at that moment, shattered the link, and I got out. Simple." The demon sneered. "Now then, anyone else want a last request?"

"How about you let those students go." Another voice rang out from the portrait hole.

Repeating his entrance a few nights before, Albus Dumbledore, along with most of the Hogwarts teaching staff, burst in.

And again, Dark Harry seemed unconcerned. "Uhoh, daddy's home..." He said mockingly, with a crooked, mocking grin on his face. He swept his gaze across the frightened Gryffindors. "Looks like I'll have to save that whole torturing thing for later." He added, looking like a child told to wait till after dinner for cookies.

As Dark Harry began to get surrounded, his adversaries boxing him in, his calm smirk never faded. "Not this time." He grinned.

He turned towards Ginny, ignoring the mighty witches and wizards who surrounded him, boring into her with his abyss-like ebony eyes. "I'll stand by what I said before, Miss Weasley. You'll die last, after each and every one you love dies. I'll break you before you die." The

demon uttered menacingly, turning his eyes from her to sweep across the room, a hungry smirk on his face. "I'll enjoy it too", he smirked, before firing a powerful bolt of black lightning towards Dumbledore, who narrowly avoided it, and the others around him scattered.

As they turned towards the apparition, they found his back to them as he sprinted towards the nearest window, and as they raised their wands to fire, Dark Harry leapt out, shattering the window and creating a rain of glass that fell with him. He avoided any major damage as he raised his arms to shield his face.

"See ya round!" He called out, looking over his shoulder as he fell.

By the time they reached the window, the demon was gone, as if he had never been there, fading back into the Darkness.

"Well, you've got to admit, he makes a good exit..." Ron, who had staggered back up, joked weakly, breaking the silence.

Several people exchanged wry looks, and Hermione shook her head in frustration, before raising her arm.

"OW! Mione, what the bloody hell was that for!"

Thanks to That Kid Crying In the Corner, PinkyTheSnowman, jbfritz, Pleione, Hunter101, Nimbirosa, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, spike blade, VFPC, Harrie, harrysmom, FroBoy, Moonlight Flowers, nogoalielikeme, Oomahey, mashimaromadness, QueenWeasel, eraser, Tanydwr, Julie Long, MaraudersIce05, and FirePhoenix for reviewing!

Q&A

Hunter101- Good question. Who knows? (Besides me, that is)

Nimbirosa- Once again, my apologies.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- The main theme for Dark Harry's appearance (that I like to play when I write these chapters, anyway) is One Winged Angel, from FF7. It's cool, and fits!

harrysmom- Themes of sacrificing love to save the world is tragic, and I will write that one day. But here... this story is more focused on Harry and his dark alter ego, but is also on Ginny. Just not as much.

Oomahey- Wow. No offense taken about the rant, its good to get stuff like this off your chest. As for your ideas that why would Harry try to get away from Ginny... he's just being stupid, really. We know that Harry shouldn't, but does he? Same thing with Voldemort. Now, as for WHY we (authors) do this... I don't know why others do it, but me... I personally think a little suffering never hurt anyone...

Why do I make life so hard on Harry? Because... I can. (Horrible answer, I don't hate Harry, suffering is just how I write) Now, as for giving Harry something to fight for, I give him Ginny, his friends, and the adults he cares for. Others sometimes give him nothing, but I have a few things he needs to fight for. I'll give him some more as we go on. Again, I'm not offended at all, in fact, I rather enjoyed this review.

eraser- Actually... I really don't. But as for your other questions, Dumbledore won't turn a blind eye to the demon's movements (it makes his job harder, actually), and Ginny... you'll have to find out.

Tanydwr- No, I've got a name. A very fitting name... or should I say names? (Ohhh.... plot hints!) One name is the demon's chosen name, the other is what he really is. (Although that second name might not make it to the final version of this story... its a bit sketchy)

MaraudersIce05- Yeah, it is pretty cold outside. I'm glad (strangely) that this story is that creepy.

FirePhoenix- Nice idea, but not where this is going.

AN: Well, looks like Dark Harry's loose on the world once more. What kind of terror will he unleash? Tune in next time to find out, and don't forget to review!

## Chapter 14 Thanatos

Ginny lay quietly in her dorm, sobbing slightly, feeling miserable and stupid in the repercussions of her actions, and generally just feeling down. The pain that festered in her gut wasn't the pain of rejection from Dean, but the overwhelming suffering of guilt, guilt at the knowledge that it was her fault Harry was gone, and his darker half free to kill again.

Rejecting all comfort from Hermione, Ron, even the Headmaster, she wanted to suffer, because it was her fault that all this happened. Her anger at Harry... her hatred of him, that part of herself she refused to acknowledge, the part that hated Harry for not loving her, that dark part of her soul might have doomed them all.

It was so confusing to her... images of that wonderful, sweet boy Harry was, that boy with battered glasses, covered in slime, holding Godric Gryffindor's sword, helping lead her out of the darkness brought out feelings of such tenderness and love... but also hatred that this boy wouldn't love her.

The feeling of hatred sickened her, and Ginny was repulsed by that dark part of her, but had to accept that part of her deep down truly resented Harry, hated him even.

And now images of that sweet boy were fading away, stripped away to reveal the demon within the man, the monster within the hero. His mocking laugh, his words haunted her even now, his promise to kill everyone she loved before she died...

All of this swirled into a small storm of feelings that raged and whimpered, love and hate and guilt and sorrow and despair all mixing into an anthology of feelings.

Finally, the redhead fell into a fitful sleep, unaware of two obsidian eyes watching her from the shadows...

Leave her alone! Harry raged angrily, within the shadows of their shared mind, as their body sat on the windowsill, cloaked in shadows, watching the youngest Weasley sleep.

The demon laughed his cold, mocking laugh and grinned mentally. But she's so peaceful... He said softly, reaching out for Ginny's hair, and instinctively, she recoiled, and the demon smiled viciously. I hate peaceful people. Besides, he added, I'm just going to torture her... I'll save killing her for after I deal with everyone else in this castle.

Dark Harry raised his hand, preparing to send Ginny into a land of nightmares and tortures, all before she even awoke from her slumber. Darkness swirled in his hand, and prepared to do its master's bidding.

NO! Harry roared, and hurled every vestige of strength he had at the demon, battering him within their mind. Desperation filled him, concern and love for Ginny surged through his soul, flooding him with new, unprecedented strength. Brilliant golden light surged around Harry, and for a moment, the shadows that imprisoned him were gone, and the demon was surprised and lost control of the body for a moment.

Quickly, Harry jerked the hand that held the dark power down towards the ground, and it dispelled like smoke from the flame, panting as he reveled in the fact that he was back in control... for the moment.

What the- This is my body now Harry! The demon roared, and hurled his own strength at Harry, who was battered back for a moment, but the light surged in him again and he hurled his strength against the demon's, Dark and Light clashing on a new battleground, the battleground of their mind.

Though unknown at the time, their battles would rage on many battlefields, many in a war of Dark and Light, a duet of twin souls born as opposites.

Though neither had ever fought for control of their body before, Harry having always been in control until moments when his guard slipped and the fiend took over, somehow, they both knew how to fight the other. Their will, their strength, their souls clashed, Dark and Light in a seemingly never-ending waltz of battle, as they struck and slashed and fought, all within their mind.



But all battles have an end. No matter how long and stalemated the fight, there must always be a victor and the defeated, a winner and a loser. And so this battle too, had to end, and someone had to lose.

And it was the Light, it was the Boy-Who-Lived who faltered first. Although Harry was strengthened by this new power, it did not help him enough against the demon's greater experience with his own powers, and suddenly the Boy-Who-Lived found himself losing the battle for control. After a few more moments, the demon managed to hurl Harry back into the cage of shadows.

Suddenly, their body stumbled, and the demon gasped in relief, holding his chest with a hand. Glancing at the youngest Weasley, he smirked. "Looks like I have to take care of your boyfriend first," Dark Harry said softly, menacingly, "But I'll see you soon enough." He promised the sleeping redhead.

Then he was gone, like a wisp of smoke cleared in the midnight wind. Albus Dumbledore sank into his Headmaster's chair wearily, the comfortable surroundings doing nothing for his distressed state. It was a gamble, he knew, to use the power of the Sealing Bond, what with the risks of out of control feelings destroying the bond, as it had, but he had hoped to buy enough time to find out a way to deal with the demon.

Now, the demon was out of Hogwarts, possibly on the other side of the world by now, doing only the Almighty God knew what.

No, he corrected himself. The demon was a bloodthirsty creature, and one who did not take slights and offense lightly. No doubt that he was still in Britain or Scotland, waiting to strike.

But another thought jolted the Headmaster, like lightning flashing in a storm. Would the demon go after Tom first?

But again, he corrected himself. Dark Harry was smart, ruthlessly so, and would definitely try to shake the Order off his trail first, since only they knew the existence of the demon.

For a brief moment, Dumbledore considered the possibility of the darker Harry allying with Tom, but shook it from his mind. Tom would never ally with a creature that powerful, and most likely, the demon would try to kill Tom before he allied with him.

Although wracked with guilty at the thought, somehow, Dumbledore hoped for a brief second that they would kill each other off first.

Sighing wearily, the Headmaster searched another book, looking, as always, for a description of the dark presence within the Boy-Who-Lived, and, as always, finding nothing. The veil of mystery around the demon was thick, and there was nothing, it seemed, that could tell him anything about it. He was almost correct.

Hermione Jane Granger shivered in her bed, unable to sleep, cold despite the blankets and comforters that wrapped around her. The image of that mocking, dark, twisted, evil face of that darker version of her best friend kept haunting her. The way he callously hurled her into the wall, the way he laughed and leered and mocked them all.

She tried to summon images of the real Harry, the one who helped save her from a troll, who became one of her best friends, but it was harder and harder every time. The images of that... fiend, that demon kept appearing, swirling and tainting the memory of her best friend.

Unable to sleep, she exited her dormitory quietly, hoping that the common room fire might provide her with some semblance of peace this night, or at least ward off her chills.

Unexpectedly, Hermione had someone else to compete with for the heat of the fire. She instantly recognized Ron's hair, and her heart beat a little quicker, her pulse raced, and she cursed herself for it. He's your best friend! He doesn't like you that way! she screamed at herself, but her heart managed to override her brain, and all Hermione could do was hope that her feelings didn't betray her as she said softly, "Ron?"

The redhead jumped, literally, startled, wand raised, until he saw who stood there and relaxed slowly, his body sagging as he sank back into the couch. "Don't do that Mione," He said softly.

Hermione frowned. Normally Ron would have been loud and argumentive, but now he sounded tired, defeated almost. "What's wrong?" She asked quietly, concerned as she sat next to him on the couch.

Ron fought to hide the blush that rose at how close the bushy haired girl was sitting to him, thankful it was dark. Shakily, he answered, "I... its nothing." He said quickly.

The brown haired girl turned towards Ron and raised an eyebrow questioningly. "I know you better than that Ronald Weasley." She said, a sharp edge to her tone, before it mollified. "What's wrong?"

For a while, Ron was silent, and Hermione almost gave up when suddenly he spoke.

"I'm scared Hermione..." Ron whispered softly, timidly. "Not just for me, but for Harry... will we ever see him again?" The young man whispered fearfully, fear for his best friend, his brother in all but blood.

"I'm scared too Ron, I'm scared we won't see Harry again..." Hermione said softly, fearfully, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder and scooting closer to the young man. Breathing softly, she whispered, "But all we can do is hope... and believe that he will come back."

For a moment, Ron hesitated, before grasping the young woman and holding her to him. Hermione gasped in surprise, thought about resisting, but relented, knowing that she needed him and he needed her. "I hope so too Hermione... I hope so too."

Around them, the shadows danced and haunted them, mocking them with their emptiness. Together, the two scared teens clung to each other, watching the fire desperately try to fight off the shadows that tried to overwhelm it, clutching each other as if they could be ripped apart at any moment.

The demon's powers had taken him to a small suburban area somewhere in Scotland. Although he preferred torturing his victims first, the battle with his light side had drained him thoroughly, and he needed sustenance if he was going to move forward with his agenda.

Basically, he was really hungry.

But unlike most people, who would go to a restaurant or their own kitchen for food, Dark Harry fed on souls... and him being in a suburban area was the equivalent of a small child in the candy store, allowed to have whatever he wanted.

And the demon had a sweet tooth for souls.

Stepping towards the first house he could reach, the door opened for him, the darkness manipulating it to give the demon passage. Inside, a family, one rather pretty young, blond woman, her aged, graying mother, and an elderly bald man undoubtedly her father, sat at the couch watching the television, unaware of the intruder.

The peace of the moment made Dark Harry smile at the thought of what he was about to do.

What.. are you going to do... Harry gasped weakly, barely able to keep conscious after their struggle.

The demon, who hadn't lost as much strength as the Boy-Who-Lived, simply replied, Eat.

"That... was exquisite." The demon said happily, patting his belly, although it was just a mere gesture, as he hadn't eaten anything that went into his stomach. He was full, or at least his hunger was sated for now. This large amount of souls would sustain him, and hopefully he would not have to feed again until he ridded himself of his problem.

You're disgusting, Harry, said problem gasped, horrified by what he had been forced to bear witness to.

For two hours, his darker half had walked into various homes, just like the first, and devoured their souls in a sickening manner. He didn't open his mouth and swallow them whole or anything like that. Instead, the darkness squeezed the life out of his victims, and devoured them with shadows, and the shadows fed the darker version of the Boy-Who-Lived.

That was how he lived. His body needed no sustenance, sustained only by shadows, by the souls of his victims. He wasn't something truly alive, but a gaping abyss of Darkness that devoured everything it came in contact with, a killing machine, an inhuman monster, a fiend... a demon.

It was at the moment when Harry had first borne witness to the demon's feeding and regaining strength that he realized what would happen if he wasn't stopped. His darker half would continue to consume soul after soul, never dying, surviving on the deaths of others, until all life was destroyed by his hunger, and nothing remained but shadows and silence.

This last house had a perfectly aged (in the Dark Harry's opinion) bachelor, an elderly, scholarly man who had been reading a book on mythology when Dark Harry had walked in.

"Well, now that I'm full, let's find a way to deal with the little issue of you, sport." The demon mentally grinned viciously at Harry, who shivered in the shadows where he was imprisoned.

As the demon was about to leave, one of the books that had fallen to the floor, the one his victim had been reading, caught his eye.

The book had opened to a passage, and the bold print words stared at him and intrigued him. Amusedly, he picked the book up, glancing over it, before a slow smile settled over his twisted features, an unfriendly, sadistic smile.

Thanatos- The Greek Personification and the closest equivalent the Christian Angel of Death the Greeks had. Twin brother of Hypnos, the personification of Sleep, and son of the Night, he lives with Hades, the god of the underworld. He visits humans and touches them, granting them permanent rest, unlike his brother who granted temporary rest.

It reminded him of himself, bringing death upon mortals, sending them into the Underworld, granting them eternal rest and silence. The personification of Death itself... a most intriguing and fitting name for this unholy creature.

“Thanatos huh?” The demon said, grinning. “I kind of like it.”

The demon had a name.

Thanks to maybeso, DoomGazeHell, Privan, Ginny M, dan, Oomahey, MaraudersIce05, Nimbirosa, VFPC, Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage, japanese-jew, nogoalielikeme, spike blade, Scorchy-11, jbfritz, Pleione, PaperPrincezz, Hunter101, Tanydwr, Night-Owl123, QueenWeasel, PinkyTheSnowman, mashimaromadness, Zeromaru: Chaos Mode, Hakkai-Gojyo-Goku-Sanzo, FroBoy, csferosha, HPbabe143, CuRiOuSiTy KiLLeD tHe RaT, foxylittlechibi, FirePhionex, light barrer, and Calen for reviewing!

## Q&A

DoomGazeHell- Despair ending? I love happy endings... with a metric ton of suffering to get there... well, this won't have a real happy as in riding of into the sunset happily ever after deal, but if you define happy as in survival of some (grin) of the major characters, then I suppose...

Privan- I never said I was trying to make him the “cool” villain, a la Sephiroth and his ilk. I wanted him to be a creepy villain, maybe not cool, but damn scary.

Ginny M- As you can see... he's got some other problems to deal with first.

dan- Oh no, it will never, ever be that easy to kill Voldemort, even if I gave Harry enough power to level a continent, I wouldn't make it easy on him to kill Tom. The battle scene will be fun, and original (hopefully).

Oomahey- Some extra Ginny stewing for you. Tom's not high on his list of concerns... not while the Order is on his trail.

MaraudersIce05- I think this chapter answers that question.

Nimbirosa- Thanks for the compensatory (no, that's not a word) review. When Dark Harry goes on a rampage, who says Harry's even

going to be around? There's more than one way to get rid of magical entities within someone... and not all of them are sealing bonds. I'm glad you find my comments constructive, though I'm not sure I like it being fun to pester me. But, seeing as how I just survived my sister's sleepover (shudders), I'm immune to most forms of pestering. I don't mind at all, and my AIM sn is YamiTidus, and my e-mail is yamichaospaladin at sbcglobal dot net. I'm thinking of putting my AIM sn up on my profile anyway... it might be fun to talk to people about my fics. So go on and pester away! (Note, this message is up for anyone who wants to talk on AIM too)

Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage- You've been a very loyal reviewer, and since you asked nicely, of course I'll give you a straight answer. Nope. Never played D & D, and I've never known anything about it.

Scorchy-11- Yeah, that's where I got it from. But for the life of me, I can't remember what the circumstances around that quote are... but I'm pretty sure it was Angelus who said it.

PaperPrincezz- I didn't know it was on this site! I've read it on Phoenixsong and liked it. I'll go review that now.

Hunter101- He thinks it will be fun... he's sadist, after all.

Tanydwr- I liked Ron's line too, and I came up with it on the fly, as I was finishing the chapter. And you've got one of his names now.

PinkyTheSnowman- He's smart enough to know when to cut and run. People spell whoa woah? That doesn't make any sense. But bad grammar annoys me too.

mashimaromadness- No, no no! Ginny loves Harry! It's just that part of her hates him for not loving her, resenting him for ignoring her. Quite understandable really.

Zeromaru: Chaos Mode- Very nice suggestions.

csferosha- Nah... something that broken can't be fixed. Bonds between Harry and Ginny are things I like, and will work into a few other stories, but in here, its no more.

light barrer- Dark Harry isn't in love with Ginny... that would be Harry. Dark Harry is kind of like a creepy stalker dude.

AN: And his name is finally revealed! Uh... and a quick comment, seeing as how many people have asked about this. Why do people think Dark Harry will be redeemed? I mean, I wrote about forgiveness and redemption in my other story... but this is totally different. I've been updating a lot, mainly because these chapters are partly finished before I even got to them, but now I need to create a new one from scratch. Thanks for reading and please review!v



## Chapter 15 Sundering

Lost... lost in the abyss...

Time had no more meaning to the young man, the prisoner... trapped in an endless cage of shadows... within his mind. Unable to touch, hear, see, smell, or talk to anything except the Other. Him. The Demon.

He tried to recall images of what he was before the Demon took over... sights and sounds and smells that were now nothing but flights of fancy, a world he could no longer reach, things that even he himself barely believed were real...

Like a drowning man, he continually managed to surface for a moment or two, remembering who he was, but then it was all stripped from him, every memory, every feeling, every fiber of his very being torn apart, and he was forced back down into the Darkness.

Sometimes he wonders if those places he had once been are just his imagination, if all that he remembers was just an illusion, and this cage of shadows is the cold, harsh truth. If everything he once was, everything he experienced, was just a lie, a dream, a fantasy.

Trying, struggling to find himself again, he fights the Darkness bitterly, and like a small spark in shadow, he manages to illuminate his prison and remove the Darkness.

For a moment, he surfaces, breaking the sea of nothingness that continues to drown him, and remembers. His name, Harry James Potter. He's a wizard... the Boy-Who-Lived... and then suddenly he's jerked back down into Darkness as the spark goes out, and the shadows press in once more, hungry.

He tries to scream, to protest, to mark his fear, to try and give aid to his fight, but no sound comes from his lips as the shadows converge to drown him again...

And his last coherent thought, that last tie to his old self as he falls in Darkness is that he is in Hell.

It had been a week since Harry had transformed into a sadistic demon and terrorized the Gryffindor House, and now rumors had spread like wildfire in a dry summer. The rumormongers spread tales of how Ginny slept with both Dean and Harry (at different times, of course), how Harry, driven off the edge already, snapped and was now allied with the Dark Lord, or how Harry was really Voldemort in disguise, and that he'd been waiting for his chance to attack the Gryffindors, and other such nonsensical ideas.

Ron and Hermione's angry gazes and threats of violence (and actual violence, on Ron's part) did douse the wildfire rumors, but it was just not enough. With Ginny completely out of touch with the world, they had no real way, other than revealing the incredulous story that Harry had two personalities, the nice and heroic Boy-Who-Lived, and the completely psychopathic and sadistic monster, to disprove the rumors.

Students actively talked about how Harry was going to kill them all, or how he was really the Dark Lord's son (which caused Ron to fall over laughing), and such talk.

But all the rumors were of light heart, which Albus Dumbledore had none of. Two days after intense and fruitless research, the Headmaster called his brother Aberforth Dumbledore, specialist in the field of Soul Magic. Dumbledore had contacted him before, when the demon was first sealed, but his brother hadn't had time to do anything before the demon escaped.

Looking out into the peaceful night, Dumbledore was sure that the demon was planning something. The disappearance of an entire block of people in the suburbs he had linked to the demon feeding, but that was all it had done. The Headmaster sighed. His brother's research was needed now, more than ever.

As if summoned by his thoughts, the fire in his office erupted, banishing the shadows of the room to the back, and the head of his brother (who could have been Dumbledore's slightly shorter, thinner twin), appeared in the fire.

“Aberforth!” Dumbledore greeted, smiling despite himself.

“Hello Albus,” Aberforth responded, smiling, before he went into a more business-like tone. “I think I can separate young Potter from that creature, but you’d have to get me close enough to do it.”

“How?” Albus asked curiously.

“Not here,” Aberforth shook his head, and his brother remembered how paranoid he was with his research, which was why the even more eccentric Dumbledore isolated himself. “Come to my flat tomorrow. I’m knackered tonight.” He yawned to prove his point.

The Headmaster smiled warmly at his brother. “Thank you. I’ll be there tomorrow. Around nine?”

“Nine is fine. See you then brother.” Aberforth said, and then disappeared.

Albus Dumbledore felt his heart lighten a bit. His brother had found a way. Now all they need do is find the demon, and contain him again so that Aberforth could do his work. Still, he was uneasy about something, and the Headmaster knew that it wouldn’t be this easy to beat the demon.

From outside the window, cloaked in shadow, a pair of obsidian eyes twinkles darkly, thoughtfully. “See you soon, Aberforth.” Thanatos whispered with a smirk, and then the Darkness took him away.

The Other... the Demon was pleased... immensely pleased. Somehow... he could discern that from within the cage of shadow.

And in his pleasure, the Demon’s prisoner felt the shadows close in tighter, a noose of nothingness around his very soul, burning, searing, slashing, cleaving, cutting, and obliterating his soul with endless midnight and silence. It was beyond injury, beyond torture, beyond pain... beyond even Death.

The lost one screamed internally, and no sound came from him, the vacuum of the Stygian abyss drowning all sound, Light, and Hope...

Thanatos was immensely pleased indeed. He knew that eventually, the old man would figure out a way to separate them. On this point, the fiend agreed completely. Harry and the demon just could not keep the same body... that would not work out at all.

Of course, where they disagreed was who would keep this body.

Smiling, he allowed the Darkness to spill forth Albus Dumbledore's knowledge of where his brother lived, in the same fashion he discovered fears and nightmares unspoken... how he easily preyed on weaknesses and feelings.

The Darkness knows all... after all, it lives in all people. In the Darkness, there are no secrets. After all, you cannot hide from the hidden, you cannot run from your shadow, you cannot lie to lies... and you cannot shield yourself from yourself. Darkness is everywhere, it is in everyone, it is everyone.

But in Thanatos, the Darkness didn't just live within... it lived. Period.

Aberforth Dumbledore slept peacefully in his bed in an upper room of the Hog's Head, content with the knowledge that he had made a breakthrough of immense proportions... and of terrible consequences.

A sudden blaring klaxon shattered his slumber, and the octogenarian leapt out of his bed with surprising agility, wand raised and ready. Unfortunately, it wasn't fast enough.

Aberforth was able to awake instantly from slumber, a habit both he and his brother developed in the war against Grindelwald, but even he took a few seconds to realize that his wand was no longer in his hand. After another two seconds, he realized he wasn't moving into cover.

"Pleased to finally meet you Aberforth. And who'd have guessed Albus Dumbledore's brother was the bar man at the Hog's Head?" A

voice greeted warmly, but there was a distinct ethereal... evil quality to his voice.

“You have me at a bit of a disadvantage.” The elderly man replied evenly.

“Ah yes, allow me to introduce myself. The name is Thanatos.” The creature of Darkness stepped forth from the shadows, smiling in a most unpleasant manner. As usual, he wore all black, and seemed to be made of living shadow, from his own thinning body to the clothes and hair and eyes that made nearly every part of his body seem made of midnight.

“Named after the Greek god of death, are you?” Aberforth replied in that same tone, unshaken.

“Indeed I am... quite apt at doing the job too.” Thanatos replied in that same upbeat, cheerful tone, as if he was discussing a new gadget or trophy he had won, instead of an occupation as a merchant of death.

“What do you want from me?” The bar man asked, dropping the facade.

“Want... I want what everyone wants, Aberforth.” The demon stepped closer to the old man and whispered softly, “Freedom.”

The younger Dumbledore blinked confusedly. “What?” He asked.

“I want freedom... to be my own person. And unfortunately... my weaker half is infringing on that freedom. So I need your help to free myself.” Thanatos replied, his voice staying at a low, dangerous whisper.

“I will not help you.” Aberforth replied bravely, not an inch of fear in his eyes.

The demon smiled. “Oh goody. I just love it when they play hard to get.”

“You will not get my help, even if you torture me.” The octogenarian swallowed, but was ready for the pain.

“I think I’ll get plenty of things out of you...” Thanatos replied with a smirk.

Thanatos smirked to himself. His prediction was true, of course, unlike that bat Trelawney. He got plenty of things out of Aberforth.

Screams, various bodily fluids, but no research... or so the old man had believed when the shadows consumed him. Aberforth Dumbledore had died thinking he had protected his secrets, when in fact he had already failed.

The demon had no need to torture to gain his information, since a person’s heart, mind, and soul told him everything already. He just wanted to make a symphony of screams... to pass the time, and to alert-

A tugging at the edge of his mind made Thanatos smirk wider. “It looks like the cavalry’s on its way Harry... they’ll be a little late, of course.

“Far too late to help you, anyway Harry.”

The prisoner in shadows screamed even greater, a terrible burning within him. It felt as though every part of his body was being ripped apart violently, while he was on combusting into a pile of ash.

Slashing, burning, ripping, wounding, damaging, injuring, PAIN all around...

Unending pain... relentless torment... unyielding agony... the young man screamed as he was put through Calvary, as he was put on his cross and beaten brutally...

After an endless infinity, he felt a violent ripping, and suddenly he knew no more.

The Demon smiled. Harry James Potter was no longer a threat... in fact, he was probably not even on this plane of existence anymore.

When the Headmaster had received a panicked report from a distressed Minerva McGonagall that the Hog's Head was ablaze, Dumbledore could have sworn his heart skipped a beat. When he tried to Floo anywhere nearby, and found himself unable to, he felt his heart stop.

Dashing madly towards the gates, he nearly crashed into a running Ronald Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Ginny Weasley, the last who was carrying the Marauder's Map. With panicked looks in their eyes, they told the Headmaster what he already knew, but also told him of a secret passageway (with a bit of difficulty from Ron) to Hogsmeade.

Pleased, he granted fifty points to Gryffindor in a panicked whim, and dashed off in a rush that was beyond his age, followed closely by Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and a very tired but still distressed Minerva McGonagall.

After an age, an age that was far too long, they reached the exit of the tunnel, and ran out into the street, where they stopped dead at the sight of the inferno that was once the Hog's Head ablaze. Most were running about in a frightened panic, or staying indoors to avoid getting hurt in what they believed was a Death Eater attack.

In reality, they should have preferred one.

Albus Dumbledore's heart was wracked with a fear and grief that tore into his very soul... his only remaining family, his little brother... was dead. Somehow, he knew. He could hear his breaths come in short, ragged, rapid spurts and he didn't care that he was straining himself as he ran towards the burning ruin that was once his brother's home.

"Aberforth! Aberforth!" The normally unshakable Headmaster screamed, reaching the inferno, all thoughts gone and replaced with a panic unlike any other. Tears began falling from his eyes, drops of water spilling out from the ocean of his eyes.

"I just love bonfires, don't you?" A chillingly familiar voice called out.

Dumbledore turned his angry, crying eyes towards the demon, who stood on the other side of the vast expanse of burning wreckage, angry and hateful and bitter and all thoughts except revenge clouding his mind. He had not been this angry in a long time... not since most of the Dumbledore family had been obliterated by Grindelwald to spite the Headmaster, all those years ago.

But now he was forcing himself to relax, the horrified chorus of screams and shouts of his companions aiding him, forcing him to become rational once more. At this range, the demon could avoid spells, that strange magic of his would stop magical movement, most likely, and crossing the fiery rubble would take time, and by then, Dark Harry would escape.

He had planned this perfectly, the Headmaster realized in horror.

"Dear Merlin... Aberforth..." McGonagall whispered in disbelief.

Ginny, Hermione, and Ron, however, were more concerned with getting Harry back, and thus, were looking directly at the smirking, black clothed replica of their best friend.

However, the demon hadn't even noticed, still smirking and talking. "I really hope you're as good a screamer as your brother Albus, because otherwise, it just won't be as much fun torturing you." He said.

"You monster!" Ginny spat hatefully.

Dark Harry smirked and put his hand to his chest in mock hurt. "Now Ginny, I have a name now. It's Thanatos. Say it with me. Tha-na-tos."

"I don't care what your damn name is!" Ginny shot back. "Give Harry back!"

"Can't do that..." Thanatos replied cheerfully in a sing-song voice. "You know Albus, your brother is damn good with that Soul Magic."



The Headmaster's already pale face went deathly. "Wha-what?" He stuttered. "You didn't-"

"Ah but I did." Thanatos said gleefully. "Now your precious Boy-Who-Lived is nothing but a drifting soul... if he isn't already dead."

"You're lying! Its another trick!" Ron yelled desperately.

The demon shook his head, grinning mockingly. "'fraid not, Ronny boy."

"We'll find a way to bring him back then," Hermione said bravely, swallowing her fear.

Thanatos threw back his head and laughed that cold, chilling laugh. "Well, you are a big know-it-all, so maybe you will... or maybe you won't." Hermione picked up on the veiled threat behind the demon's mocking words, and scowled.

"Well, as much as I love this banter, I'm afraid I just have to go. Places to go, things to do," the demon smirked viciously and cast his gaze on all of them, from Dumbledore, to McGonagall, to Ginny, to Ron, and lastly Hermione, "People to kill."

He turned around and began walking away slowly, calmly, cockily turning his back to his opponents. "See you soon," Thanatos called out cheerfully, looking back at them over his shoulder and raising his hand in farewell, before he looked forward, let his hand down, and added in a lower, darker, deadlier tone,

"See you real soon."

Thanks to VFPC, spike blade, Pleione, Quillian, Nimbirosa, Night-Owl123, Bujiana, jbfritz, Discombobulated, Alan Quicksilver, DoomGazeHell, DarkMagicPracticer, harrismom, csferosha, HellHound, FutureGoddess, Julie Long, mashimaromadness, Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage, FroBoy, japanese-jew, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, kobe23, YamiClara, FirePhionex, Ice-Pheonix-Tears, captainplanet2003, HazelWolf, and kobe23 for reviewing!

## Q&A

Nimbirosa- No problem. That's just one disturbing thing... there's an AU scene to this for what Thanatos (finally I can use his freakin name) does to Malfoy... I think it's my most sadistic work ever. Am I dividing your love of both Harry and Ginny? ‘

Bujiana- (looks both pleased and embarrassed) Thanks. I mean really, thank you. I'm glad you've enjoyed this so much, and offered such nice constructive praise. I totally agree with how you described Harry, which is exactly what I used when making Thanatos' character. Where Harry is shy, Thanatos is bold, where Harry is revolted, Thanatos is excited, where Harry is headstrong and brash, Thanatos is coldly calculating.

Alan Quicksilver- I'd love to have an e-mail conversation. I'm not sure how to cross message ICQ either, anyway. A quick correction to my e-mail address on last chapter, it has an underscore between yami and chaos.

DoomGazeHell- Thanks for reminding me about the school. Any mention of them might not have made it otherwise. Now then, how does Light Harry gain strength? Well... that's a secret.

harrysmom- Yeah... its "like" there are two souls in one body... (maniacal laughter) Oh and yes, Harry's feelings are definitely something Thanatos will learn to fear... in time. After a few more people are added to Thanatos' body count... and most aren't nameless. (return of maniacal laughter)

csferosha- Actually, it was Xanatos. And from that statement, you can probably gather I have read it. Now, will Harry and Thanatos ever merge? I thought about it... but nah. There's enough of Dark and Light merging elsewhere.

HellHound- Indeed I have read his stories. Damn good writer, loads better than me. Of course From the Abyss (the story you referenced) is damn sadistic and scary, which is probably why this reminds you of it, right?

FutureGoddess- Aw... sorry to heart that. Well, that's okay. I'm glad you liked it anyway.

mashimaromadness- I like your style of thinking much better than others. Thanks for the compliment on Dreams too. And yes, Thanatos is a real Greek god.

Samurai Demon-God Sekkikage- Maybe. Maybe not. Never assume you know everything, because the universe will find a way to screw you over. Besides, I said before, Thanatos is not a spawned from Hell, minion of the Morningstar demon. Plus, I've never played D&D, so chances of you being right are very slim. And no, the god of death will not be appearing anytime. Ever. So no divine forces are fighting Thanatos... just people.

arekuruu-inabikari-no-She- I want to watch that series, but just the few clips I've seen have kind of freaked me out, so I'm hesitant. Even I have a limit on blood and gore.

captainplanet2003- Who says Thanatos can be defeated? Or at least permanently?

AN: That last scene's one of my favorites. It's just so creepy and fitting. Remember to review! I love to hear opinions on this fic!

## Chapter 16 Damage

Hermione Jane Granger sighed wearily, flipping the page of another book in her secluded corner of the library. It was past curfew, well into the night, and if it wasn't for the fact that the Headmaster had given her explicit permission to stay as long as she wanted, she would have been in serious trouble, ever since Thanatos got on the loose.

She remembered the haunted look on the once vivified face of Albus Dumbledore and gave another sad sigh. The octogenarian had understood that Hermione would best be comforted among books, trying, even if it should be for naught, to help her friend.

Ron even tried to help her, but the redhead had no patience for books, and accepted Hermione's proposition for him to leave, albeit reluctantly.

Hermione gave a sad, tired smile at that. Ron, thickheaded and insensitive, could be sweet and helpful when the situation called for it, even offering to bring her some food and drink before Madam Pince loomed up threateningly.

She shook her head, trying to rid herself of romantic thoughts when her other best friend was a lost soul.

Anger boiled in her, anger at Thanatos, anger at herself for not having the answers yet, and even angry at these dusty tomes for not supplying her with the answer she needed.

She wanted these books to give her hope... but all they offered was meaningless meanings of unimportance.

Everything she depended on, the friendship of the Trio, Harry's leadership in a crisis, and the knowledge of books, everything was damaged and broken and gone.

All she had left was Ron. Another smile graced her face, a gentler and loving smile as Ron's support flooded her memories.

As images flashed in her mind, a sudden, loud, hauntingly familiar laugh tore the silence of the library apart.

“Damn... you and the Weasley? How in the hell did Potter miss that?” Thanatos asked, stepping from the shadows of the corner where he had been watching her.

Icy fear gripped the bushy haired girl as she stood up slowly, gripping her wand tightly. She had to stall him, had to wait for-

“Are you expecting someone to help?” The creature of Darkness asked cheerfully, shaking his head. “Fraid that no one’s going to help little Miss Granger today... Go ahead though, shout.” He shrugged nonchalantly, leaning against the bookshelf and nodding at her. “Go on.”

Hermione didn’t know what was going on, but fear overwhelmed her mind for a second, and she yelled loudly, screaming for help. Nothing but silence and shadow answered.

“Did I forget to mention that I killed the librarian?” Thanatos laughed, shaking his head. “Damn dry soul though.”

Blood drained from the bushy haired girl’s face as she shook violently. “What do you want with me?”

Thanatos smiled viciously. “I want to play tag.”

“Ta-tag?” Hermione asked, blinking in confusion.

“Haven’t you ever played?” Thanatos asked, shaking his head. “So much for you being a know-it all. Well here’s out it works. The person who is it has to tag the persons, or in this case, person, who isn’t it. When the person gets tagged, they become it. I’m it... but when I tag you, you won’t be tagging me though.”

The young woman quickly grew paler at the knowledge of exactly what the demon was planning to do to her when he “tagged” her.

“Run fast.” The creature smirked, and then turned around. “Go on... it makes things interesting.”

Knowing that the demon had all the cards but not caring, Hermione ran from the secluded corner of the library, and found everything changed.

First off, the entrance to the library was gone, replaced by a solid obsidian wall. When Hermione ran towards it, slamming her fists against it, it held firmly. Panting slightly, she grabbed her wand at and shouted, “REDUCTO!”

The Reductor Curse smashed into the obsidian wall, but it merely shuddered under the impact, and then stood still. Before Hermione could try again, Thanatos singsong voice rang out through the silence. “Ready or not, here I come!”

Out of the corner of her eye, Hermine saw his shifting shadow and knew she would never have enough time to escape that way. Desperately, she tore off into the labyrinth of bookshelves.

“Her-mi-on-e, where are you?” The demon asked in the same voice, walking around slowly, his shadows probing the moonlight, giving Hermione only a small knowledge of where the creature was going.

Running from alley to alley of the bookshelf city, Hermione ran on desperately, looking over her shoulder every few seconds, trying to find the taunting fiend.

Hermione Granger knew she was dead. While skilled at learning the spells, she did not have the full on raw power that Dumbledore or even Harry, when he showed such potential, had. Her strength lay in her research and planning, not in quick, spur-of-the-moment decisions and actions that Harry had showed. She was without friends, allies, and hope.

And then she hit a dead end, and found herself with nowhere to go.

“Where are you...” Thanatos whispered softly, every step sounding like a thunderclap to Hermione’s desperate ears, every breath he

made a whirlwind, his shadows a creeping abyss, the very shadow of death.

Finally, the demon stepped into the alley where she stood against the wall, shaking. "End game."

Desperation, fear, and despair were swallowing her up, and Hermione felt lost and alone in the abyss, separate from life, light, and hope. She would die here, and be forgotten...

A single thought, however, cut through the Darkness. Harry had fought odds like this before... and he had remained strong. Ron bravely sacrificed himself at the age of eleven to help his friends move onward.

Their friendship was still with her, even if neither of them were there. She would never be alone, and she would never be lost to her friends. Through them, she would live on. Their bond was not a spoken one, not something that could be defined in words. And that bond would transcend even death.

Swallowing, Hermione pictured Harry, determined and unbowed, and Ron, hotheaded and protective, and drew strength from that. A new, hidden resolve, sprang from a deep well in her soul. Drawing herself up, wand raised, back unbowed, head held proudly up, Hermione Jane Granger took a stand against the Darkness, proving once and for all that she was a true Gryffindor.

"Give me your best shot."

"Gladly."

And then Thanatos struck her down, and Hermione was swallowed by a world of Darkness.

Ronald Weasley sighed. It looked like Hermione wasn't going to show for a while. Despairingly, he glanced at the stormy looking night, where ominous clouds brewed, a Darkness just over the horizon.

“Ron, you should go to bed. Staying up isn’t going to help anyone.” Ginny said softly from the top of the stairs.

“Ginny... how can you sleep? Harry’s-“ But a look flashed on Ginny’s face, one that Ron recognized instantly. Guilt. Self-hatred. Ginny was taking all the blame on herself... just like Harry.

“We need to help Harry. And you know Hermione, she’s best at research. We’d only be in the way.” Ron nodded unhappily, and trudged upstairs, opening the door to his dorm.

The soft sound of pained whimpering from his supposedly empty bed immediately told him something was wrong.

Ron ran to his bed, and stopped short.

Then he began screaming at the sight on his bed. His screams were of horror, of horrors unimaginable and nightmarish, things that no one could ever possibly want to see. The screams of the damned in Hell’s most torturous circles.

Hermione’s honey brown eyes flickered with dying life while he screamed, the wound within her stomach bleeding continuously, saturating his bed with crimson tears as the storm began to play its song of sorrow.

“Hermione! Oh God, what happened to you!” Ron managed to rasp, rushing to her side blindly, but he knew the answer. Thanatos

“Ro-Ro-Ron...” Hermione managed to whisper, her voice insubstantial and weak, like a vanishing spirit’s cry, coughing up blood violently. Outside, thunder began to flash, the storm raged, and inside, Ron raged too. Rain poured from his cheeks and from the sky, both man and nature crying for this death.

“Oh... God...” Ron whispered, grabbing her and holding her as close as he could. He grasped blindly for his wand, but knew it was futile. Not even the best healers could fix the gaping wounds in her stomach. Nothing could.



"I-I-love you..." the bushy haired girl rasped softly, grasping Ron and pulling him close passionately, hungrily.

Ron kissed her softly, desperately, trying to force life in her with that kiss. He pulled out his wand and tried to remember the spell, but Hermione pushed it aside. "It's-too...late." She whispered softly. "Just hold me Ron. Please?" She asked softly, and her dying breaths made it impossible to deny her.

He grasped her and pulled her closer, close, so close he could feel every part of her touching him. He felt the tears begin to descend down his face, hot and wet and fast, feeling them drip down, slashing across his face, feeling them burn, wanting to feel. He wanted this to be a nightmare.

"Please don't cry Ron..." Hermione managed brokenly, weakly.

"You're dying, Mione! How can I not cry! You can't leave me!" Ron cried out hysterically, pulling her closer.

Thunder flashed again. The storm was rising as the dying young woman was falling.

"But... don't... hate Harry for this." Hermione murmured sleepily, slipping into the final sleep.

Ron was struck. Should he hate Harry? He hated Thanatos, hated that sadistic monster with a passion beyond anything he had ever felt, except how he felt for the woman in his arms. Harry's bitterness, anger, hatred created and fueled Thanatos, every feeling within Harry was reflected within Thanatos.

But it was a broken, shattered, dark, twisted, perverted, and warped reflection. A mockery.

No, he couldn't hate Harry. Harry would be destroyed, almost as much as Ron was being destroyed. Harry needed Hermione, maybe not in the way Ron needed her, but all the same, Hermione had kept

them in line. She had cared for them, made sure they never strayed too far, made sure that they never lost focus.

She was their light. She was his light.

"I won't...But... nothing will ever be the same without you..." Ron murmured, his voice reaching somewhere down the line between comfort and frenzy.

Outside, the rain flew faster and harder, banging the cold ground into mud, cleansing and dirtying.

"Don't...everything will be okay in the end Ron." Hermione gasped, her pain increasing. "I... I'm not upset... I...I walked with heroes." As she said this, her eyes burned with familiar conviction, before she coughed up more crimson blood.

"Harry will be back... won't he?" Ron asked again.

"Of course he will... but not just him. You, Dumbledore, your parents, the Order..." Hermione said, grasping Ron and pulling him closer, their eyes, sapphire meeting honey brown, and in that moment, all the love they felt for each other passed just in sight. "All of you... are... heroes."

She fell back into the bed, and Ron grabbed, checking her fading pulse. "Oh, God... Please not yet." Ron whispered.

"Please... hold me... it's so cold..." Hermione whispered meekly.

Rain poured like teardrops of Heaven, thunder flashed like the anger of the Almighty at this injustice.

"I love you so much..." Ron murmured emotionally, "So much... I love you..." He kept kissing the top of her head, feeling his tears continuously making hot slashes and trails across his face.

"I love you too Ron..." Hermione rasped.

The storm raged and flashed and struck violently against the earth.

"I wish... I wish we could have been married, and had kids, and lived together." Ron whispered tearfully, "It wasn't supposed to be like this!" the redhead cried out, pulling her closer.

"You were supposed to be my bride, and Harry the best man. Why... Why did all of this have to happen..." Ron breathed desperately, "Why? Why..." he asked whatever deity listened.

"I'm so sorry..." Hermione breathed, her breath slow and fighting now.

The wind rose, adding its voice to the chorus of sorrow.

"This is just a dream... Why can't we start over... I wasted so much time... Why..." Ron rasped frenziedly, "Why... God why did it turn out like this..."

"We have to say goodbye now..." Hermione gasped, her words like a last wisp of smoke from a dying candle. Outside, the storm reached a crescendo, a banging symphony of teardrops of rain and protests of thunder and frenzied seizures of wind.

"NO! I won't... I won't..."

"Then I'll go without you saying it..." Hermione whispered feebly.

The symphony continued to play on, louder, louder, and louder.

"NO! I WON'T!" Ron cried out helplessly, clutching her tighter, as if by passing his body warmth to her, she could survive.

Louder, and louder, and louder the chorus of the storm raged.

"I love you Ron...Goodbye..." Hermione Jane Granger breathed one last time, and then lay still. The warmth left her, as if echoing the departure of her spirit.

As if in time with her death, the storm reached its climax, a loud flashing and banging and roaring as it battered the windows, thunder

flashing everywhere, howls of gales and the sound of pouring rain or tears drowning sound, sight, light, hope.

The wind howled in anguish, masking the howl of the man that screamed along with it, full of desperation and anger and hatred and a heart that was shattered.

Ron felt his burning tears strike her pale face, while the crimson blood of his beloved, that dark red stain devoured the once innocent ivory of his bed sheets.

And all around him, within his mind or maybe for real, he could hear Thanatos' mocking laughter all around him, freezing into his soul, cutting into like an icy gale, cleaving into the numbness that descended onto his soul...

It was then that Ronald Bilius Weasley was able to say the words he could not say before.

"Goodbye..."

Thanks to Nimbirosa, Khadon, HazelWolf, Alan Quicksilver, Pleione, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, spike blade, harrismom, FRED, Harrie, Dimensional Analysis, PinkyTheSnowman, moonlightwitch, japanese-jew, Night-Owl123, GinnyM, Lady of Masballe, Ice-Pheonix-Tears, FroBoy, Ginerva Potter, HPbabe143, Rose of Many Thorns, Cattatra, mashimaromadness, gaul1, YamiClara, light barrer, and VFPC for reviewing!

QA

Nimbirosa- For once, anyway.

Khadon- One main character down... And while many people think that Thanatos' flair for the dramatic may destroy him, he's also got a mind sharper than a Slytherin's. He won't overplay the drama, and will not hesitate to do things more simplistically... its just not as fun.

arekuruu-inabikari-no-She- Ninja Scroll X (or something like that). Now that is bloody.

harrysmom- Confident, yes. Overconfident... to a degree. But he's definitely not complacent, as you can see. (Hermione might have, given if enough time, found some way to beat him)

FRED- I think this does the trick just as well. Thanatos doesn't need a home base anyway.

Harrie- I never said I killed Harry. Thanatos does have weaknesses, look back over the previous chapters.

Night-Owl123- This ties last chapter for favoritism, I think, for me.

GinnyM- Keep on reading... you'll find out.

Lady of Masbolle- Who knows? And as for your review on Sunday Morning, ha ha, very funny. Just because I'm sadistic and love to write angst doesn't mean I can't do fluff... just not very well.

Rose of Many Thorns- Soon enough.

light barrer- No. No. And no.

AN: (Finishes fireproofing the computer, while laughing diabolically)  
Please don't hurt me! I won't be able to keep writing! Hermione almost never dies (at least on screen) in most fanfictions. I wanted to put one away from the norm. Killing a main character was pretty fun... I should do it more often. Thanks for reading and please review!  
(Continues laughing insanely)

## Chapter 17 One Step Closer

Nothingness... that was all he was. A shadow... a shadow of light. Lost in the void, alone, unknown, and hurt. He knew nothing, he heard and saw and tasted and felt nothing.

The only thing that existed was the abyss. It called to him, endlessly, relentlessly, seductively, calling him to the last slumber, luring him to the eternal sleep. If he would take but one step closer to the edge, he'd break, he'd fall, and he'd be lost.

But something was holding him here. One might even call it... Fate. Fate tied him to this world, for there were still things he had to do, and there was a balance that had to be upheld.

Fighting the Darkness, the shadow struggled to find himself. It seemed like eternities, endless times and boundless lifetimes, fighting to reclaim himself, some former shred, a scrap of what he once was.

At last, however, something stirred him. A single, horrible, terrible sound. A laugh. A laugh of Darkness, echoing, mocking, haunting, cutting deep within the soul like a chilling wind.

But it brought resolve to the specter, this shadow of light. And at last, he had a purpose. He had to stop the Darkness.

The shadow of light moved, not knowing where he went but knowing all the while it was where he was meant to be.

Far away from Hogwarts, on top of a hill overlooking a graveyard and a church, a single manor dominated the hilltop. Within the shadows of Riddle Manor, one of the most feared men of all time paced in his study... worriedly. The Dark Lord, the Heir of Slytherin, one of the most cunning humans to ever live... was completely in the dark. In more ways than one.

He had lost multiple Death Eaters at Diagon Alley, this he accepted. He had to lose some to further his campaign. What he could not

fathom was where Bella went. Wormtail's disappearance could have been attributed to cowardice or misplaced hopes of redemption, but Bella, and consequently the Death Eaters sent to Potter's home were completely loyal.

His mind had traced the disappearances of Minister Fudge, Dolores Umbridge, and Draco Malfoy to the same threat that had probably killed Bella and Wormtail.

And over a week ago, new, disturbing information had come before the Dark Lord through a few spies at Hogwarts. Harry Potter... had changed. Apparently he had gone berserk, changing his eyes to a midnight black and almost killing every Gryffindor. He had actually escaped Dumbledore and a band of teachers, defying them. Snape had been adequately punished for not telling him that.

And now, the Hog's Head had burned down, and this time, Severus had reported that Potter had shown up again, still in the same condition, having killed Aberforth Dumbledore.

In an instant, the Heir of Slytherin had made the connections between the disappearances and Potter's new look. But more mysteries came.

Something about the strange uses of Dark Magic and the changes in Potter was tugging at the memory of Lord Voldemort, and the Dark Lord struggled to discover a way to combat a darker, more dangerous Harry Potter.

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, magic to magic." Headmaster Albus Dumbledore intoned gravely, his every feature etched in tragic stone. "And with these words, we commit our fallen sister, Hermione Jane Granger to the earth."

The words echoed about the graveyard, resonating on deaf ears. The small glade was a private area usually reserved for Order members, but exceptions must be made.

Above, the sky seemed dressed in black too, storm clouds brewing but not releasing their storm yet, waiting.

Ronald Bilius Weasley simply stared at the coffin of his beloved, his cobalt eyes raining teardrops that sliced wet trails across his face. There was only an abyss in him, only a vacuum, a void of feelings. He had already said his goodbye. This ritual, these words echoed within him, but did nothing for him. He was a hollow man, a stuffed man, devoid of all things that made someone human. His heart was empty and dead.

The coffin was as empty as his heart, as Hermione's parents refused to let any magical beings come in contact with them or come to their funeral for her.

But the ritual still meant the same. A way of saying goodbye.

The storm flashed, and drops of rain began to pour.

Ginny Weasley sniffed as tears fell from her eyes, staining the ground. Cold fury burned within the redhead, bright and fiery as her hair. Her hatred of Thanatos grew with every passing second, with each pound of grief that hardened in her heart. She swore to herself that she'd see that demon go down, and do anything she could to do so.

No one cared about the pouring rain. Some were grateful that these tears from Heaven masked their own tears, others simply didn't care.

Minerva McGonagall had tears openly pouring from her eyes, the normally dour Scot now looking broken and distraught.

They all did, sitting there in wooden chairs on this unhappy day, wearing dark clothes and crying openly. Well, all save Snape, who sat there and looked stoic and unfeeling.

There was no thunder this time. This was a quiet storm, a mourning storm with tears.

The Headmaster closed his eyes. Failure was all he could feel. For all his power, all his machinations, all his resources, he couldn't save the life of one of his students. Raising his wand, he prepared to commit the coffin to the earth.



"Well, well, well...what have we here?" An unnervingly familiar voice called out from a small distance away, ethereal and evil. The audience was frozen to their seats, and the demonic apparition laughed softly, humorlessly, darkly. Every eye turned, every body shook with absolute terror or rage in some cases, as they saw the sight of a grinning demon strolling nonchalantly towards the gathering.

"A funeral? And I wasn't invited?"

No one could speak, either frozen with shock or terror or both. All of them felt the darkness descend on their hearts, and all they could feel was numbness and despair.

The grin changed to a nasty smirk as Thanatos chided them softly, but his words rang out clearly for all to hear.

"Now that just isn't nice."

No one dared move. Chances were they couldn't move anyway.

The demon shook his head, stepping closer, and closer, and closer to the coffin. "Well... perhaps I simply didn't get the memo. If that is the case, my...apologies for being late, friends: traffic can be quite the bitch." He paused and peered at the empty coffin and shook his head in mock disappointment and sighed. "Well, that's a damn shame.

"I'd also give my condolences for this death, but that would be a waste of breath, considering I don't mean it." Thanatos laughed, that damnable smirk never leaving his face.

The fiend stepped among them, and not one of them could even budge and inch. Closing his eyes, the demon gave a pleased sigh that could almost be called rapture. "Damn... I can just feel all the hate emanating from all of you. Its so... intoxicating."

Albus Dumbledore attempted to move, but found himself bound where he stood. Concentrating, he began to draw out his full power. There was no holding back now, and the memory of his own brother's death still haunted him.

Thanatos was standing in the center of them now, his shadowy figure almost blending into the dark of their sorrowful attire. He didn't mind the rain, it seemed. In fact, it was almost as if he welcomed it and the storm, to cover the sun with mourning dark. He paused at Ron Weasley, whose eyes burned with hatred and a pain that gnawed at his heart and mind. "Oh, look, it's Miss Priss, the loverboy. Aren't you terribly sad that your Mudblood girlfriend is dead?" Thanatos gave his cold, mocking laugh in response to his own question.

"No, you haven't even begun to imagine true sadness, true pain." His laughter echoed about the glade, sounding as if he was a chorus of Darkness all on his own. "But you will," Thanatos assured Ron, looking the redhead directly in the eyes, "You will." Glancing about at the gathering, he smirked. "You all will. So how about we start... now!"

And, repeating the incident only a few weeks ago, everything around the demonic apparition was blasted away by a furious blast of wind, sending them crashing to the ground with incredible force. Many of them, including McGonagall and Snape, were knocked out cold by the attack, their heads hitting the ground hard.

Thanatos laughed viciously. "Oops, was that me?"

The Darkness was close... one step at a time, the shadow of light moved towards it.

Even now, he could hear its horrible laugh, that laugh that cut the soul apart.

And he could hear silent screams, souls shrieking in terror as they were hunted by the Hunter of Souls.

The shadow of light continued to move, one step closer to the Darkness with each passing moment.

Ron struggled angrily against his invisible bonds, his head aching slightly from when he hit the ground, but he had been lucky enough to

be farther away from the fiend. Hate like he had never known before, anger, rage, fury boiled within and was threatening to erupt. It should have scared Ron, this hate, this rage, this desire to kill the grinning demon before him, but all he could feel was this hate.

Thanatos seemed to feel it too, and turned back towards Ron. "Oh... does Ronnie want to fight?"

You know I do! Ron roared in his own mind.

The demonic apparition seemed to hear, and maybe he did, because he let go of Ron's bonds. "Come on then, old chap! Let's have a go at it." Thanatos laughed, and raised his fists up mockingly.

Ron could only see rage as he leapt for the demon, who easily sidestepped. "You just never learn, do you?" Thanatos asked, grinning and shaking his head in disappointment.

The redhead was only infuriated further, and lunged forward again, and again, the demon avoided it easily. But this time, Ron found something else. His wand. His thoughts were infused with only one thought. Kill. Spinning around, his cobalt eyes leaking tears and blazing with hate, he roared in absolute fury, "AVADA KEDAVRA!"

Every eye that was open widened, every mouth open in shock, but all were hoping that this bolt of death would do its job.

But it was not to be, as Thanatos lightly, nonchalantly stepped aside, letting the Killing Curse slash the air next to him, missing by less than a centimeter. "Aw... so close." And then he raised his hand, letting a dark bolt of evil pool itself together.

"Looks like you'll be seeing your little Mudblood girlfriend soon enough, Ronnie boy." And with that and a laugh, the demonic apparition loosed his dark killing bolt, which cleaved the air apart as it tore away towards the redhead.

Ron only stared, accepting his death, and wishing only that Hermione would forgive him for not avenging her as he closed his eyes in resignation, preparing for death. But death did not come.

Something else did.

Little lances of light, sparking and swirling and twisting, coalesced together to form a silvery form, and took the bolt of darkness in what would be its midriff. As it buckled under the magical attack, the ethereal form took shape, growing and changing until at last, a familiar visage greeted the oculus of all.

Once again, every single eye was wide with shock, and this time, even the unflappably calm Thanatos was gaping. But only for a moment, before his mouth snapped shut, his eyes narrowed, and for the first time, everyone could see that they now radiated utter hate, fury, and malice, nothing like the calm, sadistic demon of before as he snarled one word.

“Potter.”

Thanks to gaul1, Khadon, Pleione, Kyra Kitsune Ryu, Nimbirosa, Quillian, Ice-Pheonix-Tears, Rose Of Many Thorns, japanese-jew, Lady of Masballe, Riser, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, PinkyTheSnowman, FroBoy, Julie Long, HPbabe143, spike blade, Bujiana, light barrer, Night-Owl123, Ginerva Potter, DrakeBolt, grumpygrim, harrysmom, DeadSerenity, Schnuff, kabab, YamiClara, Hekate101, Vegita43, Maxennce, Hakkai-Goyjo-Goku-Sanzo, and mashimaromadness for reviewing!

QA

Khadon- Aw... but where's the fun in having someone die when they could live in torment? (That's my inner Thanatos talking)

Pleione- I'll kill enough that the rest will be guilty.

Kyra Kitsune Ryu- Thanatos lives inside Harry. They like Harry. They don't want to hurt/maim/kill him. That might hurt their chances at

killing Voldemort. (Yeah, now Harry's gone, but when they tried to get rid of Thanatos before, Harry was still there)

Rose Of Many Thorns- I thank you for both the quote and the advice. I'll be sure to do that (grin).

Lady of Masbolle- Maybe you could, one day. Where do I get the summaries and titles? Lots of time and practice. I'm not really a Maroon 5 fan (yeah, I wouldn't expect me to be one either), and I didn't even know who Jesse McCartney was until you mentioned him. I'm glad you enjoyed Hermione's death. R/Hr was just kind of there for me to exploit.

Riser- Uh... yeah, yeah he did. For the second question, I'm not sure that's how the Fidelius works.

arekuruu-inabikari-no-She- Probably. I haven't seen it. (Or if I have, I didn't know it)

PinkyTheSnowman- You say that every time I kill characters. (grin) So I guess you'll hate me till the end of this fic. And no promises on any other fic either.

HPbabe143- (shrugs) He had to come from somewhere.

Ginerva Potter- Nope. Just the brutal reality.

harrysmom- Probably should have protected the comp more. Very nice work on catching the scene! And no, Ron cannot stop Thanatos, no matter how much he hates him.

DeadSerenity- Yeah, I am. Hermione might have figured out some way to stop Thanatos, and we just can't have that now, not when the fun is just beginning, can we?

Schnuff- Later. Thanatos is having fun with the weaklings, testing his strength.

Fire Department (Flame response)

Nippledora Tweaks- My God! I'm torn between slight offendedness (heck, I'll make up words because of this) and pride (I've caused flammers to use that tiny gray matter they call their brains. I'm so happy!). How long did it take you to come up with that sentence? Three days? I mean the use of the word abomination, I must congratulate you on graduating junior high!

(Note: I'm not usually this much of a asshole, but this person was just asking for it. I'm fine with being flamed, just have some logical reasoning and examples of what I did wrong for God's sake! It's really hard to know how to correct yourself if no one tells you what's the problem)

AN: As always, thanks for reading, and a review would be a nice your welcome!

## Chapter 18 From the Abyss

Little lances of light, sparking and swirling and twisting, coalesced together to form a silvery form, and took the bolt of darkness in what would be its midriff. As it buckled under the magical attack, the ethereal form took shape, growing and changing until at last, a familiar visage greeted the oculus of all.

Once again, every single eye was wide with shock, and this time, even the unflappably calm Thanatos was gaping. But only for a moment, before his mouth snapped shut, his eyes narrowed, and for the first time, everyone could see that they now radiated utter hate, fury, and malice, nothing like the calm, sadistic demon of before as he snarled one word.

“Potter.”

No one could move. No one could even blink. It was as if Time had stilled itself at the return of the Boy-Who-Lived.

At least, it looked like him, anyway.

His form was silvery tinged, and had an almost ethereal look to it, as if he would vanish like smoke in the wind. Dressed in plain jeans and a t-shirt, with familiar glasses and the same emerald eyes, Harry Potter floated defiantly.

“I thought I was rid of you.” Thanatos growled.

“I came back because I need to stop you.” Harry whispered, but his words were carried by the wind.

“You? Stop me?” The demon laughed, his composure returning, cockiness filling his voice. “Not bloody likely, kiddo.” Gesturing at the incorporeal Harry, he grinned. “You, ghost. Me, solid.”

Suddenly, the air brightened for a moment, and Thanatos stopped laughing as Harry’s fist connected with his cheek.

Glancing at the darkening bruise that seemed almost... burn-like, the air began to darken and crackle with furious energy. "Fine." Thanatos said softly. "Then let's get to it then."

Lashing his arms out, Thanatos unleashed a storm of dark thunderbolts towards the Boy-Who-Lived, who flew aside easily. On instinct, Harry yelled, "EXPELLIARMUS!"

Eyes widened as a jet of red light erupted from Harry's palm, and Thanatos barely spun around, avoiding the attack.

"So you're more than a ghost..." Thanatos murmured quietly, and his lips quirked into a grin. "Perhaps this will be more interesting than I thought."

Beyond the combat, everyone's eyes were glued to the battle. Boy-Who-Lived versus his dark alter ego. The hero and his inner demon.

No one could move. Not that they could, what with Thanatos' strange power holding them in place.

But something was happening to their constraints, one person, namely Albus Dumbledore realized. Slowly, they were being worn down. Either Harry's presence or the battle was weakening the bonds... or perhaps it was both.

"Well... I've never tried Wandless before. Let's see what happens." Thanatos laughed, before yelling, "CRUCIO!"

The jet of the Cruciatus Curse went straight through the Boy-Who-Lived.

Snapping his fingers in annoyance, Thanatos grunted, "Bugger." But the grin returned. "I guess pure Dark will have to do."

Suddenly the area around Harry turned completely black, and the Boy-Who-Lived felt himself being choked, his entire essence being swallowed by the hungry dark. It was as if the abyss had opened itself underneath him, gaping and ready to devour him.



And Dumbledore realized this was how Thanatos fed on souls.

“NO!” Ginny and Ron screamed in unison, their bonds of darkness shattering as they fired their respective spells towards the demon.

Thanatos narrowly leapt aside, but the Darkness surrounding Harry kept up, and a terrified shriek cut the air apart and the hearts of everyone around them.

“Its not nice to interfere when people are eating.” Thanatos snarled, and loosed a dark bolt towards them.

Ron was struck in the side and he screamed as it seemingly struck at his very essence, causing him to convulse in utter agony.

“You sick sonofabitch!” Ginny screamed, hurling herself at the demon, who sidestepped easily.

“Didn’t your mother ever tell you Ginevra,” Thanatos whispered, and grabbed Ginny’s robes and pulled her up to look into his abyss eyes. “It’s not nice to call people names.”

For a moment, she looked ready to vomit, but strength returned to her chocolate brown eyes. “You’re not a person.” Ginny snarled, and spit on his face.

Time froze.

Every eye turned towards the apparently suicidal young woman.

Raising his hand to his face, Thanatos wiped the spit off his face slowly. “You know, the trouble with you people is you don’t know when to give up.” He whispered, and then backhanded Ginny, sending her crashing into a gaggle of chairs.

Slowly, the demon raised his arm into the air, letting it coalesce into a shadow ball, deeper than the darkest nightmare. “I’ve been working on this for a while, you know.” Thanatos whispered, letting his every word drip with malevolence. “Bit by bit, it’ll kill you ever so slowly. It’ll drag up all the darkest memories of your soul and throw them at you

until there's nothing left of you." The grin changed to a smirk. "It'll make you utterly helpless, no better than a mewling kitten. You might even go so far as to call it mind rape..."

The smirk widened. "I wonder how long you'll last."

Suddenly, the cloud of Darkness around Harry went supernova, and everything became pure white.

When the white cleared, Thanatos was on the ground, his clothing smoldering from whatever hidden powers the Boy-Who-Lived had unleashed. Across from him, Harry floated imperiously, glaring daggers at his darker half.

Slowly, the demon stood. "You know... this whole deus ex machina thing of yours is really, really fucking annoying!" Thanatos roared, and loosed a flurry of dark bolts at Harry, who flew aside, but this time, the fiend was ready as he leapt with inhuman speed for the Boy-Who-Lived, and struck him in the chest.

Harry, although not technically breathing, was the spiritual equivalent of it as he was hurled backwards. But he wouldn't give up, as he loosed his own punch and struck Thanatos in the face.

"JUST DIE!" Thanatos nearly screamed, letting bolt after bolt of Darkness rain from his hands.

Harry was impacted once, twice, thrice, and hurled backwards as more and more as the assault continued.

Screams erupted from all around as smoke engulfed the Boy-Who-Lived, but Thanatos didn't stop his barrage.

"STOP IT!" Ginny screamed, trying to hurl herself at the demon, but he stood immovable, laughing and screaming.

After another moment, Thanatos stopped, smiling viciously. "That was entertaining."

"Don't leave, Thanatos. The second act is only just begun." Dumbledore replied, his voice coming from... the dust cloud.

"NO!" The demon screamed, "HOW DID YOU-"

"It's amazing what anger can blind you to." The Headmaster said calmly. As the smoke cleared, it revealed a pure white shield surrounding Dumbledore and the spirit form of Harry Potter.

Glancing about himself, Thanatos realized that the others were free again. "Another day Harry." The demon promised.

And then he was gone.

For a brief while, there was nothing but silence. Shock had settled over everyone present, the heat and adrenaline of battle leaving them with a weary ache. Finally, it was broken by a soft voice.

"Harry... is that you?" Ginny asked quietly, stepping towards the ethereal, silvery form.

Nodding slightly, Harry's eyes looked unfocused for a moment. "Yeah... its me. I almost didn't make it back."

Tearfully, not caring that her last words to him had been ones of loathing and anger, Ginny hurled herself towards the Boy-Who-Lived... and promptly went through him.

Glancing down at himself, Harry murmured, "Bugger."

A quiet laugh murmured through the crowd, but Harry's next words cut it short.

"Who died?" The Boy-Who-Lived asked softly, looking at the coffin. "And where's-" Harry began, searching for Hermione, the one person he hadn't seen this entire battle and-

"Oh no."

Ron nodded weakly, getting up despite the aches and pains in his heart and soul. "Come on Harry... let's get inside."

Harry shook his head. "It was him, wasn't it."

The word him was said with more venom than the Boy-Who-Lived had ever used for the names of Voldemort and Bellatrix and Wormtail combined.

"Yeah." Ron choked out softly.

For a moment, Harry was silent. Then he nodded and turned, so as to hide the bitter tears that fell from his face.

When Ron and Ginny moved to comfort him, he began to sob openly.

"DAMNIT! WHY HER! WHY HER YOU SON OF A-" Harry cut his curse off and fell to his knees. Silvery tears fell from his eyes.

As Ron moved to touch Harry's shoulder, Ginny stayed his hand. "He's incorporeal, remember?"

"What is he, anyway?" Her brother asked softly.

"I don't think any of us know the answer to that." She replied. "We should give him time."

And so the two Weasleys kept watch over the ethereal form of a grieving Harry James Potter, in turn watched by the others gathered.

The storm at last began to pour its pain down onto the Earth once more, but no one paid any mind to it.

"So Harry... what happened to you while you were... drifting?" Dumbledore asked softly. It was the day after the funeral, and Harry had agreed to discuss what had happened to him with the Headmaster. So now they were in the Headmaster's office, sitting (in Harry's case, floating in the center of the room).

If it was possible for... whatever the Boy-Who-Lived was to shiver, he would have. "Cold... pain... so dark." He mumbled softly.

Dumbledore's eyes spiked with pain. "If this is too traumatic-" He began, but Harry cut him off.

"I'm fine..." Harry replied softly, forcing a grin. "Just memories."

"How did you come back?" The Headmaster inquired.

"I... I needed... need to stop him." The identity of him was clear.

"Why?"

"Because... I don't know."

Dumbledore smiled kindly. "I think that's enough for now."

Harry's head shot up. "Sir... what's happened to me? How was I able to touch Thanatos... but no one else?" Earlier, they had explained that the demon had given himself a name.

The Headmaster sighed. "I have a number of theories, Harry. But whatever Thanatos is, it is clear that he was formed of is Dark magic. Harry," He began softly, "Do you remember when I told you that Voldemort may have transferred some of his powers to you?"

Harry visibly stiffened, and nodded.

"Thanatos... informed us that whatever Voldemort did to you that night created him."

An idea wormed its way into the Boy-Who-Lived's mind. "Sir, do you think Voldemort might know what Thanatos is, and how to stop him?"

Dumbledore's gaze turned sharp. "Harry, I hope you're not planning to-"

"Sir, that monster is a part of me. Or at the very least, its masquerading in my body, killing innocent people" like Hermione "and I will do anything to destroy him." Harry said firmly, hatred filling his tone.

“Even if that includes turning to your greatest foe, the one you are destined to kill or be killed by?” The Headmaster replied, his voice a little higher.

“Desperate times.” Harry shrugged. “And if Thanatos is me... then maybe Tom is the only one who can do it.”

“I cannot consent to you doing this.” Dumbledore said softly.

“I have no other choice. I will choose the lesser of two evils if need may be to stop the greater.”

“You believe Thanatos is a greater threat?” He asked.

The shade nodded, and looked away. “Headmaster... you have no idea what I saw when I was trapped with him. Thanatos has the power and will to consume all life on this planet. And every time he does it he’ll grow stronger and hungrier. He will never stop until everything is dead.”

“And Tom won’t?” Dumbledore countered.

“Voldemort’s insane, but he wants purebloods alive.” Harry replied calmly. “And I know he’ll want this threat dead.”

“My God Harry... you’re talking about making a deal with the proverbial devil.” Albus Dumbledore gasped softly.

Harry’s face hardened into grim, determined lines. “It takes a devil to kill a devil.”

But will you become that devil to do so? Albus asked silently.

Thanks to Pleione, Vegita43, Julie Long, Treck, Tanydwr, Night-Owl123, Dr Gero, Rose of Many Thorns, arekuruu-inabikari-no-She, Harrie, Zeromaru Chaos Mode, Emma Barrows, spike blade, japanese-jew, FroBoy, Maxennce, mashimaromadness, ciberloco, Pure Black, hyperdude, Me7878, Tondo-the-half-elf, Discombobulatedperson, harrysmom, Ginny M, xxJaredxx, Queen Weasel, YamiClara, and Q for reviewing!

## Q&A

Vegita43- Must have been my alter ego, or maybe you misunderstood me. I always planned for it to go down like this.

Julie Long- He came back.

Treck- Too quick.

Tanydwr- No one will! Mwhahahaha! And when is Harry ever careful?

Dr Gero- Not at all. I like the guy, personally. So much fun to write.

Rose of Many Thorns- Secret.

Zeromaru Chaos Mode- Both Harry and Thanatos still have some powers I've yet to show off... though you glimpsed one of Thanatos' in this chapter.

FroBoy- Nope. Two separate entities.

Maxennce- All will be revealed in time.

ciberloco- I'm trying to play up Ginny's guilt, but there's more to the story than her. And I'm going to delay the forgiveness stuff for a while, let her fester.

harrysmom- (looks shifty) Yeah... that would be great... but who would possibly believe that! (Forced laugh) I mean, that's just absurd. (More forced laughter)

Q- I don't know... perhaps Quillian? (Laughs)

AN: Unforgivably short compared to the wait, I'm afraid. There's just nothing I can do about the length of this chapter.

## Chapter 19 Deal With The Devil

Harry Potter floated silently on the top of the Astronomy Tower, reviewing his meeting with Dumbledore. Although to in the Headmaster's office he had conviction, when he reviewed his plan, the more and more he doubted it would work.

Was he really arrogant enough to believe he could predict and manipulate Voldemort into a battle with Thanatos? Who would he be helping in this situation?

The spirit sighed deeply, more out of habit than necessity. "What in the nine spheres of Hell am I thinking?" He asked the stars.

The stars didn't answer, only twinkling mysteriously.

But someone else did.

"I don't know, since you haven't told anyone."

Harry jumped slightly, and spun around, magic at the ready, until he recognized who was behind him. "Ginny, don't do that." He chided quietly.

The young woman blushed faintly and nodded. "Sorry." Slowly, she stepped next to the spirit. "Harry... I'm sorry."

The Boy-Who-Lived blinked. "Why?" He asked, dumbfounded.

Ginny looked at him with surprise. "I broke the blood bond that kept Thanatos at bay... its my fault your like this and my fault-" She sniffled slightly, "My fault Hermione's... dead."

Harry shook his head. "No, it's not. We didn't know that would happen. You were just angry-"

But the youngest Weasley wouldn't take that kind of answer. "No! I should have been more careful! I should-"



“Stop it.” The words had more force than a gale. Harry floated down and then bent slightly to look Ginny in the eye. “I’ve wasted my life and should have and might have. Don’t do the same.”

Ginny nodded. “Thanks Harry.” She said softly.

Harry smiled. “Anytime.”

For a moment, everything was peaceful.

Then Snape came in. “Potter. I have the information you wanted.” He said curtly, sneering at the two Gryffindors. “I hope I wasn’t... disturbing anything.” He added nastily.

Ginny’s face flamed, and Harry simply gave him a weak glare as he blushed less obviously. “Let’s go then.”

“Damn... why didn’t I figure this place before?” Harry asked himself quietly. He was floating just a little down the road of Riddle Manor, once again questioning his sanity. Glancing at the graveyard, the doubt only grew as he remembered the sheer hatred Voldemort had of him.

At least the risk was only to him. Harry had flatly refused to allow anyone to accompany him, stating that spells (at least conventional ones) didn’t work on him, making him a perfect negotiator.

The fact that Harry had only ever mediated arguments between Ron and (he swallowed) Hermione, and did a poor job of it, was not brought up.

Now of course, it seemed quite simple. Walk in, and convince Voldemort to ally himself with his most hated foes.

Discounting the number of Death Eaters that might try some Dark Magic to stop him, and the Dark Lord himself attempting something.

He sighed again. “This must be the craziest plan I’ve ever thought up.”

Although with my track record, that’s not saying too much.

Contrary to popular belief, Voldemort did not feast on the flesh of the living and the souls of the small children. He in fact, enjoyed some nice red wine with his filet mignon, served extra rare, just the way he liked it.

As he sipped from his wine, his door opened.

No, opened wasn't the right word. Imploded, more like it. Shards of wood soared and clattered to a halt nearby Lord Voldemort, and small swirls of dust flew forth.

And, flying to the feet of Voldemort, came the battered and unconscious body of Marcus Crabbe.

The Dark Lord sighed. "Did you defeat all my guards, Potter?"

Harry smirked slightly. "All the ones I could find." He shrugged. "They got in my way."

"I should have given them the day off." The Dark Lord muttered and sighed. "I assume you didn't come here to fight me, or we wouldn't be talking."

The Boy-Who-Lived nodded. "Your guards wouldn't let me in, and it seems that you've set up wards against spirits. I had to... incapacitate your guards."

"What can I say? I don't fancy being haunted." Lord Voldemort remarked with a small smile. "Enough chatter, though. What do you want, Potter?"

"To make a deal." Harry replied.

The smile turned into an amused smirk. "Interesting." The Dark Lord leaned forward, vermilion eyes flashing slightly with piqued interest. "I'm listening."

"Do you think Potter's plan will work?" Snape asked Dumbledore quietly.

The Headmaster sighed. "I have no idea." He paused, and continued. "And even if he does succeed... who is to say that is the correct course of action?"

His Potions Master simply nodded wearily. "We knew this war would force us to choose between the lesser of two evils at times. But this..." Severus Snape shrugged helplessly.

A reflective silence passed onto the room.

"I suppose we will just have to hope for the best." Dumbledore sighed.

Snape raised a sardonic eyebrow and stated flatly, "Don't feed me that optimistic crap Albus."

Lord Voldemort burst out laughing. Real, honest-to-God laughter.

It scared Harry possibly even more than Thanatos' laugh.

Possibly.

"You want me," The Dark Lord paused to wipe a fake tear of mirth from his eyes, "To help you and the old man. And not just that, but to fight someone whose been killing off my enemies."

The Boy-Who-Lived nodded, but cut in quietly. "You were not aware of his presence. There was no need to have two enemies fighting him at the same time."

Voldemort smirked. "Why Potter, that sounds almost Slytherin."

Harry nodded grimly. "That's exactly how Thanatos thinks. You're not fighting a bunch of Gryffindors. You're fighting someone who thinks like you and can use your greatest weaknesses against you."

The Dark Lord stiffened. "I have no weaknesses." He said briskly.

His foe merely smirked. "Yes you do... Tom."

For a moment, Lord Voldemort yearned to curse the boy, but he held back. Controlling his temper was something he was learning, ever since Dumbledore had bested him at the Department of Mysteries.

"What exactly do you want me to do?" The Dark Lord inquired, managing to force his voice to be calm.

"Tell me what Thanatos is." Harry said.

Lord Voldemort shot him an inquiring look, one that seemed to gauge his nemesis. "And what, pray tell, makes you think I know what he is."

"Because he's too much like you. Fueled by rage and power. I know, I've felt both of your minds." Harry shot back, a slight glare in his eyes as he remembered the terrible violation of possession.

A flash of insight struck and haunted Harry. Was that how it was for Ginny?

In that moment, Harry had never felt so disgusted with himself. To forget that you saved someone's life... how arrogant was he to think he was the only one with problems?

The Dark Lord's lips quirked into an interested smile. "You're much smarter than I gave you credit for, Potter."

"What can I say? Having you try and kill me every year makes me quite the detective." The Boy-Who-Lived responded with a trace of humor in his voice.

"True. Anyone who has lasted this long must be smart." Voldemort conceded.

"Can we get back to what Thanatos is?" Harry asked again, quietly.

"What do I get in return?" His long-time nemesis asked.

Harry sighed. "Thanatos has also been killing your people."

For a moment, the Dark Lord seemed thrown back and quickly, he pieced together what the boy meant. "He killed Bella and Wormtail."

"And he'll keep killing your people, just like he'll keep killing ours." Harry nodded. "We can try to kill each other while he keeps getting stronger, or we kill him. And then we get back to killing each other."

The Dark Lord paused and nodded in agreement, obviously plotting something else. He sighed and began. "Do you believe in the concept of pure evil, Potter?" He asked.

Harry raised a questioning eyebrow, but played along. "I used to think you were, when we first met. But Thanatos... he's even worse... something in him isn't right. He's not human."

Lord Voldemort smiled darkly. "Exactly. The concept of something being pure, completely and utterly evil is thought to be impossible by most. As the old fool would put it, everyone has a spark of light within them, no matter how dark their soul."

"Even you?" Harry inquired wryly.

The Dark Lord shot him a deadly glare. "That is not the issue. What is the issue is that some wizards believe that if you ever managed to create a being of pure darkness, it would have unimaginable power." He paused, almost grimacing. "Many have tried and failed to destroy that spark of light within their souls."

Harry decided not to inquire if Voldemort was the same.

"Something was missing. Something not even I could find." Lord Voldemort looked almost jealous for a moment. "Whatever this... 'Thanatos' is, he is the greatest evil to walk this earth. Pure and utter Darkness."

"How." Harry asked flatly.

The other chose not to respond at first, instead lacing his long fingers together and placing them in front of his mouth and his elbows propped on the table. "Perhaps whatever happened that fateful night,"

The Dark Lord seemed to have a flash of pain as a memory moved in his mind, "Whatever happened there transferred the effects of what the rituals of the eidolon had on me to you. And perhaps your infant soul, not yet fully divided between good and evil, was split into two beings."

"Eidolon?" Harry asked quietly, not liking where this was going.

"It is a word, Potter. A word for an idea or a phantasm. And the term used for this Thanatos." Voldemort explained condescendingly.

"So Thanatos is pure evil and I'm human. That explains a lot." Harry sighed quietly.

"Not quite Potter." The Dark Lord added, his face expressionless. The sinking feeling in the Boy-Who-Lived's stomach grew.

"You're an Eidolon too... in a way." At seeing Harry's shocked face, he chuckled mirthlessly. "In order for pure evil to exist... pure good must also exist." He grimaced at the idea. "This is my own guesswork, of course. But it makes sense, seeing as how dedicated you are to the light." He sneered at the spirit.

"You mean..." Harry gasped quietly.

The Dark Lord nodded. "You aren't human either. What's more... its quite probable that if the eidolon of Darkness dies," Lord Voldemort seemed to relish the next words. "You too will die. Your existence is tied to his, and if one of you is destroyed, it is quite likely the other will be too.

The silence was deafening.

"Does it work both ways?" The Boy-Who-Lived asked.

"I suppose it might." The Dark Lord said guardedly, a spark on interest in his vermilion eyes.

Finally, Harry spoke. "Then I'll make you a deal. You kill me, and Thanatos dies. Even if it doesn't work, you still win."

Lord Voldemort looked surprised. "Are you deaf as well as foolish Potter? You will die along with him, or possibly even in vain." He shrugged. "I don't really care, but I thought you were a tad smarter than the rest of my foes."

"That's a price I'm willing to pay, a risk I'm willing to take." Harry replied quietly.

"How... altruistic of you." The Dark Lord sneered disgustedly. "I think I rather like the terms." The Heir of Slytherin smirked.

"I thought you might." The Boy-Who-Lived deadpanned.

The Dark Lord grinned viciously, eyes glinting with satisfaction. "You've got yourself a deal Potter." He paused. "It may take a while, seeing as how you are a spirit, but I can wait."

Harry nodded, that sinking feeling in his stomach only growing. It was the right choice, he reminded himself. If this worked right, then at the very least one threat would be stopped. There had to be someone else who could destroy Voldemort.

"Well, lookie lookie whose making friends."

Both Lord Voldemort and the Boy-Who-Lived whirled in unison.

From the shadows, a smiling Thanatos stepped forth.

"Now see, I knew that in the end, friendship would reign on earth." The eidolon wiped a fake tear from his black eyes. "It makes me so glad to know that even the worst enemies can come together in times of crisis."

"I take it you heard everything." Voldemort deadpanned.

Thanatos smirked. "Indeed. Interesting theory, though it does pose a few problems for me." He shrugged. "But I'll worry about that after I kill you, Tommy boy."

"Looks like there's a change of plans," The Boy-Who-Lived said quietly, glancing at the Dark Lord.

"True." The Dark Lord glanced at Harry. "I'm going to enjoy killing your body." He murmured, withdrawing his wand.

Harry said nothing.

Thanatos smiled as the room grew colder and darker. "Well, I must say that feeding on your Death Munchers was quite satisfying... but I wonder how your soul tastes."

"You won't find out." The Dark Lord replied. "I know what you are, eidolon. I know how to destroy you." Voldemort raised his wand, placing himself in a dueling position.

Thanatos merely smirked and raised his hand, letting the shadows around them grow.

The Boy-Who-Lived watched, the only spectator to witness the battle between the two darkest beings that existed on this miserable planet. Thanks to PinkyTheSnowman, m-girls, Ice-Phoenix-Tears, PersonaJXT, Hakkai-Gojyo-Goku-Sanzo, VampireHeart, Bujiana, Night Wanderer, The Best witch of all, stoned joker, Bongie, brady, HPbabe143, Quillian, Tondo-the-half-elf, Pleione, japanese-jew, Zeromaru Chaos Mode, Emma Barrows, Vegita43, moonlightwitch, Night-Owl123, Georgiana, Nic'sim87, FroBoy, Harrie, YamiClara, nitrous, harrysmom, mashimaromadness, Lady of Masbolle, QueenWeasel, and Darkmoonslion for reviewing!

Q&A

PinkyTheSnowman- (blinks) Damn, three hours? I agree with the guys at your school. And it appears Shattered Reality is entering a coma.

m-girls- He tried and failed. Hasn't had the time to finish the job yet.

Tondo-the-half-elf- This would be that chapter.



Harrie- True. Harry knows that Thanatos has the potential to kill everyone, so its obvious (slightly) who is the lesser evil. Not that I'd ever tell Tom that...

harrysmom- Thanatos' anger does weaken him. As for people showing love to Harry weakening Thanatos, you're a bit off. It doesn't affect Thanatos at all... (mysterious smile)

mashimaromadness- Its okay about the rant. While Harry is made of pure light and good, you must always be aware of one thing. Just because something is good does not mean it can't be dangerous, perhaps even more so than evil because good can drive you to do terrible acts in the name of the Right. (Blinks) Sorry about my little lecture. I'll attempt to keep my soapbox in check.

Lady of Masballe- Well, this is also another "unforgivably short" chapter, isn't it? Don't worry, you've got an awesome fight to look forward to. The question you asked about bleeding sparked quite a few discussions, and I'd have to say that while Thanatos can bleed (he is corporeal), it may be a bit hard to make him.

AN: Oh... now that's a nice cliffhanger, huh? Well, have fun sitting around till the next chapter, and please review!

## Chapter 20 In The Darkness

It was a moment that would never be remembered but should have been. A moment that made the entire world seemed still.

On one side was a red eyed devil incarnate, bone white skin stretched over a skeletal frame, clad only in jet black robes. The burning embers of his eyes glared foreword with utter malevolence, the very picture of a demon. Long, spidery fingers gripped a thirteen inch yew wand, magic almost visible, straining to strike. Black robes whipped about as Lord Voldemort stared down his unlikely foe.

Against him stood another avatar of evil, wearing the visage of his lifelong nemesis, Harry James Potter. But this visage was warped, eyes blacker than night and an aura of vampiric cold sapped the strength of all but the darkest souls and the strongest stomachs. Visible tendrils of darkness whipped about him, seemingly tasting the air, ready to strike at any moment. Thanatos stood almost relaxed, standing in a semi-relaxed position, black shirt and pants ruffling with the rising power of the room. The abyss of his eyes was utterly cold and empty, but lurking just beneath the midnight was a great rage that outstripped that of the Dark Lord.

And watching the fight was the silvery form of Harry Potter, the only observer for a fight between the Dark Lord and Darkness incarnate. To help either would mean certain death at the hands of the other.

For this moment, nothing dared move or even breath.

And then Thanatos spoke, in that same cocky, swaggering manner that belied the sadistic genius within.

"You know, if I didn't both need and want you dead, I'd wonder why we were fighting."

Voldemort raised an almost incredulous look, but seemed bemused as he relaxed into a dueling stance. "You're a demon, evil incarnate." He replied simply, smirking.

“And you’re not?” The eidolon challenged with amusement.

“Point taken.” The Dark Lord acquiesced.

“I’m much better to look at, of course.” Thanatos remarked arrogantly.

“He’s got a point.” Harry offered, obviously having lost his mind.

Lord Voldemort glared at him. “Let’s get to the fight.”

The eidolon bowed mockingly. “Of course.”

Before Thanatos had even finished bowing, the Dark Lord lashed out, wand whipping forward and the words of a Killing Curse leaving his lips.

The Darkness incarnate threw himself to the floor, letting the eerie green light flash over and obliterate the wall behind him, a shower of shale falling around him. A Cruciatus Curse struck the ground next to him, sending debris flying above him as he rolled aside, and then sprang up.

Rage buried beneath the black eyes flared up, and the tendrils of Darkness whipped about, coalescing into a ball of pure, inky darkness at the demon’s chest that launched itself forward with unnatural speed.

Lord Voldemort raised up a Protection Spell, the bright blue bubble popping into existence around him just in time as the attack struck. Angry bolts of power lashed out as the attack broke over the barrier, causing bright white cracks splintering through the spell. Just as the ball of darkness broke through the bubble, it ran out of power, sputtering and causing only small, insignificant burns on the Dark Lord.

When the furious fire in the Heir of Slytherin’s eyes looked up again, the reality of the battlefield had changed, literally.

Inky, impenetrable Darkness had enveloped the room, covering the entirety of the room and leaving small tendrils that often stretched for

the Dark Lord, before retreating slightly, just out of reach. Everything was so very cold, so very dark. The darkness was stagnant, endless, and most of all, empty, a sort of emptiness that was hungry, that wanted to be sated.

At the other end of the room, arms crossed and a dark grin stretching from ear to ear, Thanatos stood. "Pretty good." He assessed, smiling. "If it wasn't for the fact that I couldn't possibly trust you, we'd be good pals."

"True." Lord Voldemort remarked, a small smirk crossing his face.

"I didn't know that you had such a unique sense of humor." Thanatos noted, amused.

"I didn't think I'd be fighting an incarnate of pure Darkness in the visage of my greatest foe." The Dark Lord shot back.

"Touche," The eidolon replied, grinning.

"Are you two going to talk or fight?" Harry asked, rolling his eyes at the absurdity of the situation.

"Well, well, well. Crowds gettin' antsy." Thanatos murmured, uncrossing his arms. "Back to the old grind then." He placed his right arm in an arc in front of his face, as if shielding himself, and his index and middle fingers stayed out as his other fingers clenched into a half-formed fist. Quickly, he lashed out, and a rush of displaced air was heard with a thunderous crack.

At the opposite end of the dining hall, Lord Voldemort felt the effects of the gesture, as several sledgehammers of air brutally smashed themselves into his ribs, causing several audible, wet snaps and a tide of blood forcing itself from his lips.

Staggering, the Dark Lord clutched his stomach in agony but kept his wand in hand. As if to chain the damage, the Darkness surrounding the combatants suddenly lashed out in tendrils, striking at the Heir of Slytherin. But as they struck, they passed through the skin, and went directly for a deeper prize that the Dark Lord valued most of all.

His magic.

Screaming in a new, unexpected agony as a burning sensation ripped its way through his already pain wracked body, Lord Voldemort could feel his very essence, his magic being torn out of him.

If it was not for his modified body, the Dark Lord would have fallen already to the onslaught. As it was, the Heir of Slytherin managed a gasped Healing Charm, washing his body with the cool green light that repaired much of the damage, save for the damage to his magic.

“What... did you... do?” Voldemort demanded weakly, spitting out a mix of blood and spittle that had collected in his mouth onto the stone floor. Something in him, that deep well of magic that he had prided himself on for so long had diminished.

And it frightened him.

Thanatos seemed quite pleased, like the cat that had caught the canary. “Just a little added danger to the game... for you, anyway. Every time I hurt you, the Darkness around us is going to tear our a bit more of your magic.” He paused and glanced over at the wheezing Dark Lord. “Quite painfully, as you’ve just found out.”

The feeling of utter terror, repugnant and unfamiliar to the Heir of Slytherin, grew.

Harry decided enough was enough. Readying his newly acquired wandless magic, he prepared to do battle with the eidolon of Darkness.

But just as he raised his palms to let loose a barrage of spells, long, pure black tendrils of Darkness grabbed his arms and suddenly his spirit was thrown into the wall, held in place by chains of pure evil.

Surprised, the Boy-Who-Lived thrashed, but the chains held strong and his struggles were to no avail.

The demon clucked his tongue in disapproval. "No help from the fans, sport." He chided, grinning but not turning his back to the Dark Lord.

Which turned out to be a wise idea.

"AVADA KEDAVRA!" The furious Lord Voldemort roared, and once more, the green light of the Killing Curse tore out of his yew wand and cut the air apart. But Thanatos was prepared and merely sidestepped the attack.

However, the Heir of Slytherin seemed prepared for this, and had yelled out a second spell to the place where the demon was now standing. "Tenebrosus Deflagare!"

A low rumble echoed throughout the dining hall of Riddle Manor as the Dark Flare Spell launched itself from Voldemort's wand. A twisted, evil looking, writhing mass of jet black fire hurtled towards the surprised eidolon, who was completely engulfed in the dark blast a second before it detonated, tongues of midnight dark flames lashing out and causing deep burns in the stone of the hall and consuming the table in the explosion.

For a moment, everything was silent as heavy gray smoke drifted about the devastated chamber, and the only sound heard could be the small panting of the Dark Lord.

But then a new sound, a terrible, awful sound broke through the smoke.

Laughter.

The laughter was amused and cold, a sort of hateful joy and delighted cruelty, and it should have been warm but was instead an empty, frozen laughter that stole the warmth of the soul.

Amid the black fires that sputtered around him and dusty rubble that created a miasma of smoke and shadow, Thanatos grinned.

"Is that all you got?"

"I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!" Ginny Weasley nearly screamed, still keeping up her furious pace in the Headmaster's office.

"Miss Weasley!" Professor McGonagall admonished sternly, though it was a bit weak due to her own anxiety.

"Please, Ginny, calm down!" Ron urged, "I'm sure Harry's fine."

The redhead whirled on McGonagall and her brother. "Harry shouldn't have taken this long! You know it, I know it, hell, I'll bet the damned portraits know it!" She ranted furiously, glaring at the elderly man.

"Curb your tongue girl and mind your place!" Severus Snape snapped.

Before an argument could break out, a calm, yet worried voice cut in smoothly. "She is right, Severus. Something has gone wrong." Albus Dumbledore said softly, only a bare hint of his anxiety showing in his voice.

"Perhaps we should send a small team of Order members to scout?" McGonagall suggested.

The dour Potions Master shook his head and answered before the Headmaster could. "If we show up too soon, the Dark Lord may think it is a trap."

Dumbledore sighed. "He's right Minerva. We must be patient."

"Patient? What if Voldemort ambushed Harry? Or what if Thanatos ambushed them!" Ginny demanded, eyes blazing with fury.

The Headmaster paused. "We will wait one hour. And then I will personally lead a team to bring Harry back."

"One hour Dumbledore." The redhead agreed, and stormed off. Without looking back, she declared, "I hope for all our sakes it isn't too much."

To that, the Headmaster could say nothing.

Thanatos dusted himself off nonchalantly, grinning all the while. Glancing at the shocked Voldemort, he shrugged and rolled his eyes. "Um, avatar of pure Darkness here! Dark Spells can't exactly touch me!"

Lord Voldemort seemed to be in the midst of a rare self-recrimination for a moment, then finally straightened. It was then that Harry and Thanatos noticed that the Heir of Slytherin was seemingly unhurt, the dark magic that created his body already having worked its magicks on the Dark Lord. Already, just moments after a brutal assault, his body had healed itself, the ribs slowly fusing themselves back together, the bits of bone that had jutted out moving back into repaired skin.

To this, even the eidolon was a bit taken aback.

Noticing the reaction, the Heir of Slytherin smirked. "I may not be an eidolon of Darkness, but I am no ordinary wizard."

"I guess so." Thanatos conceded, an amused smirk back on his lips. "I suppose I'll have to get more serious." Without another word, he raised his hand and let it go forward, where it clenched around the air as if holding the hilt of a sword. The darkness gathered itself around the air where the eidolon held his hand, coalescing into a misty, ethereal shape of shadows. Within moments, a black long sword had taken shape, its long, thin blade utterly devoid of light, a reflection of the abyss around it. The hilt was exactly suited for the demon's hand, and at the end was a small, jet black stone for the pommel.

Grinning wolfishly, Thanatos sprang for the Dark Lord, black sword flashing and darting around the air like a shadowy thunderbolt.

However, moving at an equally unnatural speed was Lord Voldemort, who ducked and dodged with prenatal senses, before lashing out, swinging his wand in a wide arc and casting a powerful Concussion Wave Spell.



The compressed atmosphere slammed into Thanatos who was hurled backwards and off his feet, but twisted at the last moment and landed gracefully, blade placed in front of him.

Unimpressed, the Heir of Slytherin loosed one of the most potent non-Dark spells in his arsenal. "Glacies Orbis!" Lord Voldemort roared, and immediately, an azure crystal globe of ice, that glistened with some faint hint of light, coalesced around the tip of his wand, surrounded by ethereal ivory mists, created by the sheer drop in temperature around the Ice Orb.

For a faint moment, the glimmering, deep sapphire stood still. And then, slowly, it began to torque, faster, and faster, and fast until it was a whirring blur of navy crystal. It was at this moment that the Ice Orb loosed itself from Voldemort's wand, tearing through the air at its unnatural speed.

Thanatos was barely able to throw himself to the floor before the azure sphere imploded against the shadow covered wall. Acute shards of ice slashed into the body of the eidolon, stabbing him with incredible force.

A smirk crossed the Dark Lord's face.

A smirk that faded quickly as the avatar of Darkness got up, unharmed, black blade left lying on the floor. Around him, the pieces of the Ice Orb fell, with not a drop of Thanatos' flesh or blood touched. "Nice shot." Charcoal lightning leapt from his outstretched palm and tore through the air with a loud hiss of displaced atmosphere. "Mine's better."

Lord Voldemort did not answer, spinning around quickly and letting the bolt strike almost an inch away from him, blasting a massive hole in the wall and sending chunks of shale smashing into the floor.

To counter, the Heir of Slytherin unleashed an Arc Lightning Spell, which sent a blood red bolt cleaving through the air, forcing Thanatos to throw himself to one side. To the eidolon's shock, the bolt suddenly split off into two crimson lightning bolts, one of which curved and struck the avatar of Darkness in the chest.

There was a blinding flash of red light that enveloped him for a moment, and Harry prayed it had been the knockout shot.

But it was not to be, as once more, that spiteful, mocking laughter of Thanatos echoed about the chamber. Patting himself down and glancing at the singe marks on his clothing, Darkness incarnate grinned. "This is getting fun."

Raising his hands into the air, a turbulent, rampant, writhing mass of umbra manifested itself overhead. At first just a foot long, and then half a meter, and then a full meter of flexuous darkness that seemed a terrible horror vivified. Thanatos smiled a feral, dangerous smile as he let his hands down and the shadowy mass hurled itself towards the Dark Lord.

Barely able to hold down the fear that had begun to run rampant throughout his heart, Lord Voldemort cried out, "UMBRA AEGIS!"

The Shadow Shield formed itself murkily, a miasma of darkness that enshrouded the Heir of Slytherin just in time as Thanatos' Darkness struck Voldemort's darkness. Shadow battled shadow as they writhed and struck against each other, dark on dark. After tense minutes, it was obvious that the demon's strength was greater as the shadows devoured shadow.

Voldemort screamed in torment as the shadow ate through his miasmic shield and began to eat into his skin, as if burning it raw and yet slowly eating it with small, sharp bites. His shrieks continued as he staggered backwards, the remains of Thanatos' umbrage mass clinging to him and continuing their invisible torture.

Then, the black tendrils waiting around the dining hall struck out, lashing into the Dark Lord's solar plexus, rending even more of the Heir of Slytherin's magic from his body.

Skin blistering and bleeding, mixing ivory with messy crimson, Lord Voldemort staggered about as his own dark magic began to work its nefarious powers. Slowly, shadowy sparks danced across his fish belly skin and began its repair. However, much to his abhorrence, the

shadows of Thanatos' magic began to intercept his body's unnatural healing powers and disrupt them.

Darkness incarnate laughed once more, that hateful sound echoing and mocking.

Against his shadowy chains, the Boy-Who-Lived watched in horror.

Raising his wand in desperation, Lord Voldemort shouted the words of the Killing Curse. To the terror of the Dark Lord, not even a glimmer of the unholy green light that he had wielded for so long, that he had used to take life after life without mercy or regret, appeared.

"It's all over now, Tommy boy. You can't even cast a Killing Curse anymore." Thanatos taunted, amused and with all the arrogance of the victor.

Desperate, Voldemort shouted out another curse, the Cruciatus Curse. Nothing. More curses launch from his lips but to no avail. Nothing. "Useless... useless... useless..." He muttered quietly, despairingly, letting the thirteen inch yew wand that had been the instrument of death for so long, and was now useless, fall from nerveless fingers.

It is at this point that he has realized what has transpired. The Heir of Slytherin has been reduced to little more than a Squib, a muggle.

All the while, the incarnation of pure evil had retrieved his sword. Panicked, the neutralized Dark Lord screams as he backs away, magic reduced to little more than a muggle shriek. "STAY AWAY FROM ME!"

Thanatos grins, the very picture of Death's avatar that is his name. Slowly, taking sadistic pleasure from it, the shadowy blade is raised.

Screaming in terror, Lord Voldemort raised his wand and arm in a vain attempt to block.

His screams only stop as the black sword passes through his brain and split his skull open. But the eidolon doesn't even pause for a

second, letting the blade continue its descent until at last its momentum ceases and he removes his bloody sword from the solar plexus of the deceased Dark Lord.

Thanatos stood over the riven body of the greatest terror of the Wizarding World and smiled as he gave the epitaph.

“There goes the most evil son of a bitch that ever lived.” He paused. “Well, except for me.”

From his position on the far wall, Harry Potter slumped in defeat against the chains of umbra that held him in place. It seemed hopeless now. Not even Voldemort, for all his formidable magic and knowledge of the arcane could defeat Thanatos.

Despair engulfed the Boy-Who-Lived, and somewhere in his mind, he was amused.

Who would have thought that the death of Voldemort would make him lose hope?

Thanks to Oomahey, Khadon, Jolly Rancher, Rose of Many Thorns, yorkvillebird, Julie Long, Zeromaru Chaos Mode, Ginerva Potter, Harrie, Vegita43, Lady of Masbolle, Ginny M, FroBoy, GreyGranian, japanese-jew, Emma Barrows, Night-Owl123, Vampyra Storm, harrysmom, Maxennce, PinkyTheSnowman, Narishma, YamiClara, Akugin Ashura, moonlightpixie89, and Hpfan4 for reviewing!

## Q&A

Oomahey- Being in Harry's body won't let Thanatos kill Voldemort. But Thanatos is the dark side of Harry's soul, and that lets him do it.

Zeromaru Chaos Mode- Thanatos draws his power from consuming souls. Harry can't give them back, and his way of gaining power is vastly different.

Lady of Masbolle- I've looked for that community, but I can't seem to find it, which is a pity, because it seems very interesting. Its not really a thread, but more of me and Nimbirosa conversing about the idea.

The idea of Thanatos as a diamond (while I've never thought about it), works very well, as this chapter proves. But what can scratch him?

Ginny M- Eidolon is a word, an actual one.

harrysmom- Emotions play a role in Harry's power. I'm glad you liked the idea of Evil vs Evil, and although Harry is not intended as a prize, I guess he is.

PinkyTheSnowman- I was aware he was a bit OOC, but then again, we only ever see Voldemort at a climactic final scene with incredible tension. Who knows how he is when he isn't pressed for time? Oh, and Shattered Reality is definitely comatose.

Hpfan4- The non spaced words are due to uploading system, not me.

AN: About Voldemort's body, I took the idea from Magic: The Gathering's Phage, where black magic stitches her together. After all, having glowing red eyes and all those other changes had to have done something to his body, not to mention the fact he's made up of dark magic. Any guesses on where the Ice Orb and the other non-canon spells are from? Thanks for reading, and as always, please review!

## Chapter 21 Curse of Memory

At Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a young woman paced irritably in front of a stone gargoyle, with her older brother trying desperately to calm her down.

“Ginny, please,” Ronald Weasley began, but to his annoyance, his little sister didn’t even spare him a glance, checking her watch compulsively instead.

Sighing, the redhead leaned against the wall, shaking his head.  
“Hour’s up.”

Albus Dumbledore looked up, and nodded at Ginny Weasley. “Yes, it appears something has delayed Mister Potter’s return.”

“More like someone.” The redhead retorted testily.

Nodding and praying silently she was wrong, the Headmaster motioned to the other Order members situated in the office, assembled to mount the rescue mission. Nearby, Ginny and her brother pulled their own wands free, determined to keep their friend from suffering the fate of Miss Granger.

Grim faced and determined, each and every one of them was ready for war.

Of course, if Miss Weasley was right, he considered, war might be a blessing.

“Well, just you and me now champ.” Thanatos said, grinning insanely, his obsidian eyes shimmering with that same madness and power.

Harry Potter glared defiantly into the face of his twisted alter ego. The silvery spirit was bound by the chains of darkness, trapped with the purest incarnation of Evil in existence.

Nearby, another incarnation of Darkness, the late Lord Voldemort, lay dead, eyes wide open and staring at the ceiling in utter horror.

Stripped of all his power, the former Dark Lord was now just another body count for the eidolon.

“Aw... don’t be like that Harry.” The demon remarked casually, strolling nonchalantly towards the Boy-Who-Lived. “I’m not such a bad guy... once you get to know me.”

“What’s there to know?” the spirit replied sarcastically. “You’re a monster bent on consuming all life on this earth.”

Thanatos just kept smiling in that same insane manner. “But once you get past that, you’ll find I’m just a lonely guy who wants a friend.”

The Boy-Who-Lived snorted derisively. “Right... once I get past the fact that you aren’t a guy, or a man, but a killing machine of pure Evil.”

“Hm... touche.” The fiend nodded, and then lashed out, backhanding Harry in the face, his Darkness allowing him to strike the defiant spirit. “I am what I am.” He said simply.

Turning his head back, Harry only continued glaring, before his own, defiant and insane smile spread across his face. “But you can’t kill me... you heard what Voldemort said. If you kill me, you die too.”

For a moment, Thanatos looked stricken and indecisive, a moment of weakness in the normally calm demon. Then the insanity and hatred was back, and his eyes once more glimmered with some unholy light. “You’re a bit too cocky for your own good, you know that Potter?” He asked, a slight anger in his tone.

“Pot, kettle, black.” Harry replied cheekily.

The air around the room became arctic cold, and Thanatos looked murderous, absolute loathing etched into his every feature. “There are worse things than death Potter... surely the old man taught you that.” He spat viciously, glaring at the Boy-Who-Lived.

“Like what?” the spirit asked, more to stall for time than interest.

An amused look settled itself on the eidolon's face, and a pit of fear festered in Harry's stomach. "I think you know... perhaps a little refresher course will help." Slowly, deliberately, he moved to place his fingertip on the boy's head, which increased the light spirit's struggles. However, it was to no avail, as the deathly cold flesh of Thanatos made contact with the spirit's head.

And then everything went black.

It seemed to take Sirius an age to fall. His body curved in a graceful arc as he sank backward through the ragged veil hanging from the arch...

"SIRIUS! SIRIUS!"

"There's nothing you can do, Harry...nothing... He's gone."

"He hasn't gone!"

"SHE KILLED SIRIUS! SHE KILLED HIM-I'LL KILL HER!"

"Ah... did you love him, little baby Potter?"

"CRUCIO!"

"Never used an unforgivable curse before, have you boy? You need to mean them, Potter! You need to really want to cause pain- to enjoy it- righteous anger won't hurt me for long- I'll show you how it is done, shall I? I'll give you a lesson-"

Gasping, Harry felt himself to return to reality, taking one labored, unnecessary breath after another.

"Was that worse than death, Potter?" Thanatos asked, his voice a disturbing mix of cold hatred and sadistic insanity. "Tell me... for I cannot feel such illusions as love, or grief, or sorrow..."

"Then you are weak." Harry replied, gasping for breath. "You're just a machine..."



The demon's eyes narrowed, and something unreadable passed through the abyss of his eyes. "You're still defiant..." He mused irritably, and then a slow, dark smile spread over his visage. "Perhaps we should try mix and match."

Harry managed only a small protest before Thanatos grabbed his skull, and the darkness overtook him again.

"Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!"

"Stand aside, you silly girl... stand aside, now..."

"Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead- Not Harry! Please... have mercy... have mercy..."

"Wands out, y'reckon?"

"Kill the spare."

"AVADA KEDAVRA!"

"Bow to death Harry."

And then the darkness receded once more, and memory faded again. This time, Harry slumped wearily against the chains, sucking in as much air as he could, but still, the dying screams of his mother and the cold, dead eyes of Cedric Diggory haunted him.

Thanatos seemed quite pleased that the defiance had dwindled, even just a little. "There are so very many things worse than death Harry... like life." He whispered softly, his face an inch away from the Boy-Who-Lived, boring into the silver shaded emerald with his jet black eyes.

"We both know that sometimes death can be a blessing... and I will make you beg for that blessing, that unreachable gift before we are through." The demon breathed, eyes glittering with malice.

Harry could only stare, the defiance in his eyes flickering and fading rapidly before the assault of memory.

“Well then...” Thanatos pulled back, smiling. “Shall we continue?”  
And then Harry’s scar burst open. He knew he was dead: it was pain beyond imagining, pain past endurance-

He was gone from the hall, he was locked in the coils of a creature with red eyes, so tightly bound that Harry did not know where his body ended and the creature’s began. They were fused together, bound by pain, and there was no escape-

And when the creature spoke, it used Harry’s mouth, so that in his agony he felt his jaw move...

“Kill me now, Dumbledore...”

Blinded and dying, every part of him screaming for release, Harry felt the creature use him again...

“If death is nothing, Dumbledore, kill the boy...”

“CRUCIO!”

An immense cold swept over them all. Harry felt his own breath catch in his chest. The cold went deeper than his skin. It was inside his chest, it was inside his very heart...

White hot pain was spreading steadily from the wound.

“CRUCIO!”

Trapped in the bowels of Riddle Manor, being tortured by his Darkness, Harry Potter screamed.

Closing his eyes as if he were savoring some rare delicacy, Thanatos smiled, and released the Boy-Who-Lived from the memories. That had been a neat trick, mixing memories so intense that they would make him think he was in actual pain.

Sometimes, he was amazed at his own brilliance.

Others would probably have pissed themselves in fear of said brilliance.

The demon grabbed Harry's chin delicately, pushing his face up to force the pained emerald eyes to stare into his midnight ones. "That's better..." Thanatos whispered. "But I think we can do more."  
"God..." Tonks breathed softly, glancing at the corpses of Death Eaters that were scattered about the entrance hall of the manor.

At least a score in this area alone, all of them scattered about, like debris in the wake of a tornado.

"No, I don't think God had anything to do with this one." Severus Snape remarked sardonically, waving his lighted wand over the bodies.

"Are they all dead?" Ginny asked quietly, glancing at the still form of one masked Death Eater.

Ron kicked at one of them, merely rolled over, lifeless. "I'd say so..." He muttered, a slight tremor in his voice.

"Come on... Harry needs our help, now more than ever, it seems." Dumbledore said quietly, already moving down the hallway.

"Ri-right..." Ron said shakily, following the Headmaster, with the others close behind.

Harry Potter had probably looked worse, but also looked better. Ashen, gasping for air as if he had been drowning, he looked like a man on his deathbed.

Which of course, was almost the situation.

Bile forced itself up from his stomach, causing him to heave slightly, his body shaking with pain. Unable to hold it in, the vomit hurled itself from his lips, landing in with a wet splat on the cold floor.

Thanatos glanced distastefully at the bile, and stepped aside. "Ready to beg yet?" He asked, his voice dangerously low.

Harry almost let out a groan of pain. His head felt so heavy, his mouth had that overpowering taste of vomit, and his whole body ached with the memories made real. Weakly, he struggled to pull his head up.

The demon's hands (or perhaps Harry's body's) clutched his chin again and pulled his head up all the way. "So... what's it gonna be?" the doppelganger questioned mercilessly.

Looking at him, drained and weary, the Boy-Who-Lived had only one response.

"Fuck you."

Immediately, all false pleasantries dropped from the demon's face and Harry caught a glimpse of what the demon's true visage, beneath the masks.

Thanatos' face was contorted in pure hatred, midnight eyes murderously narrowed. The very air dropped into deathly, arctic cold, the atmosphere twisted with malevolent power, and the darkness of the room swelled till it swallowed all light.

Raising his hand, the shadows coalesced around it, forming themselves into that same sword of Darkness that slew Voldemort. "I'LL KILL YOU!" he spat furiously, raising the blade into the air, ready to cut the spirit apart.

"Then do it." Harry replied quietly, glaring at the demon. "Do it and be done with it."

With an outraged roar, the sword swung downwards...  
As they moved through the manor, the Headmaster paused in front of two massive, imposing oak doors. The sudden stop almost forced Ron to crash into the elderly man, but thankfully, Ginny managed to grab his shirt just in time.

"What is it Albus?" Snape asked quietly, raising his wand.

Eyes narrowing, Dumbledore replied, "There is a great Darkness within those doors..."

"Thanatos?" Ginny whispered, horrified.

Grimly, the professor nodded, raising his wand.

"Then what are we waiting for! He's probably got Harry!" Ron shouted, and reached for the doorknob.

"Wait-" The Headmaster warned, but it was too late.

The redhead was thrown backwards violently as his hand connected with the metal, a brutal blast of shadow striking his chest with a wet snap.

"RON!" Ginny screamed, and ran towards her brother, kneeling next to him, shaking him worriedly. "Are you okay?"

Instead of answering, Ron's head lolled over and went limp.

His sister nearly screamed, and reach for his neck, praying desperately for a pulse. Thankfully, there was still one, albeit a weak one.

"He's okay..." Ginny whispered, relieved. He didn't get you too...

The Order members glanced at each other uneasily. "What now?" Tonks asked, glancing nervously at the door.

Turning towards the door, Dumbledore pointed his wand at the door replied, "Now all we can do is pray that we can break through in time."

And stopped a hairbreadth from Harry's neck.

Thanatos looked frozen, torn between absolute loathing and true fear, as his obsidian blade shook. A single violent twitch would sever the spirit's neck from his body.

Desperately, the Boy-Who-Lived prayed that he would die... at least then, this nightmare would be over.

With great, reluctant effort, the demon pulled his arm backwards. For a moment, the utter loathing and desire to kill was etched in his face, and Harry thought for certain he would die anyway, regardless of any consequences.

And then the mask of cocky arrogance was back up, sealing up the pure, raw hatred that was buried within those abyss eyes. Without a word, the black blade dissolved into smoke.

"Almost got me there, sport." Thanatos grinned darkly, a hint of true amusement in his eyes. "A nice, classically Gryffindor move... kill you to save the world." The grin dropped for a moment and utter disgust was replaced in his twisted visage.

"Personally... I think it was a bit Slytherin... manipulating you and all." Harry responded weakly, still pained from the nightmarish attacks on his psyche.

Nodding, the demon replied, "True, true. Quiet a sneaky move there, regardless." He actually sounded somewhat impressed.

"Thanks..." Harry managed, feeling quite strange. This was not how most of his dangerous situations usually went... then again, facing a black eyed, evil replica of himself that was the embodiment of pure Darkness was another thing he hadn't anticipated.

"Hm... but, since you tricked me, I'm going to have to make you suffer, I'm afraid." Thanatos remarked, not really sounding the least bit contrite. He raised his hand into the air, and once more, the Darkness coalesced around his palm, only this time, it remained in a spherical shape, hovering just above his palm.

"This sphere here will do everything I just did, only a hell of a lot faster and a hell of a lot more painfully." The demon explained, sounding like an inventor explaining his latest invention. "Your worst nightmares, all packed into one neat, little package." He smiled perversely. "Quite impressive, if I do say so myself."

"You really are a sick bastard." Harry retorted, glaring.

"Ah, sticks and stones Harry." Thanatos replied, grinning.

"I won't beg..." The Boy-Who-Lived growled defiantly.

To his surprise, the demon threw his head back and laughed, finally subsiding after a few moments. "I don't doubt that Harry... and while I'm sure this would drive you completely insane, I know it wouldn't truly break you... not yet." Thanatos replied, smiling mercilessly.

Blinking in surprise, the spirit was about to ask what in the name of the nine spheres of hell the demon was talking about when the doors burst open with a slam.

It hit him then... the true plans of the incarnate Dark. Opening his mouth, he looked at the first one through the door.

It was Ginny, wand raised and eyes wide with concern.

"NO!" Harry screamed, but it was too late.

Smiling for another moment, Thanatos turned and hurled the black sphere of nightmares, straight at Ginny.

Her eyes widened with shock as the sphere struck her in the chest, making a low sucking noise as it vanished inside of her.

For a moment, time stood still, with Ginny's eyes wide and shocked, Harry's cries and shouts, Dumbledore's horrified look, and Thanatos' sadistic smirk.

Then Ginny screamed as if she was being brutally tortured... which she probably was.

No one's ever understood me like you, Tom... I'm so glad I've this diary to confide in... It's like having a friend I can carry around in my pocket...

Dear Tom, I think I'm losing my memory. There are rooster feathers all over my robes and I don't know how they got there.

Dear Tom, I can't remember what I did on the night of Halloween, but a cat was attacked and I've got pain all down my front.

Dear Tom, Percy keeps telling me I'm pale and I'm not myself. I think he suspects me...

There was another attack today and I don't know where I was. Tom, what am I going to do? I think I'm going mad... I think I'm the one attacking everyone, Tom!

"Stop... please... no Tom... don't..." Ginny sobbed, distraught and curled into a ball on the floor, nails cutting into her flesh, tears slashing hot tracks across her face, haunted by the curse of memory.

"GINNY!" Harry screamed, and struggled furiously against the binds of shadows. A feeling of desperation overtook him and he gave one final, violent thrash, which shattered the chains and the spirit flew aimlessly for a moment, before flying to the girl's side.

Thanatos' cold, mocking laughter made the chorus for the tragic moment. He continued laughing, even as he dodged a powerful elemental spell from Dumbledore.

"I think that'll do it for today champ..." The demon grinned in that same, insane, sadistic manner. "I think I broke your little girlfriend, but I promise you... there'll be so much worse for you later."

Harry's eyes blazed with vengeance and absolute hatred. "I'll kill you." He whispered softly.

The Darkness incarnate's eyes darkened, even as he continued laughing.

"I'll be waiting, Potter."

Black smoke wrapped itself around him, even as a cocoon of Darkness swallowed him up. And then the miasma of umbra



collapsed upon itself, and Thanatos was gone, his mocking laughter still ringing in the air, coupled with Ginny's violent sobs.

Pressing the completely distraught girl's body to his chest, Harry said quietly, with an aura of terrifying conviction...

"I swear it..."

Review Response (Because it sounds better than Q&A)

Nippledora Tweaks-Right... there's no way you're a middle schooler. Because insults and threats are perfectly mature. I frankly don't give a damn what you think of my fic, since I know for certain its not that great. You're just being an ass, instead of being constructive. That's my problem with you. I don't normally go out of my way to make confrontations, you know, but you're just pushing it.

PinkyTheSnowman- He is, really, but hey, I like to have my villains with a sense of humor. And excellent, an update on Link You Idiot! I thought it just died or something.

GreyGranian- Dunno. Its an actual word, though.

Catnip070- I'm glad. And I have a very, very relentless muse.

Lady of Masbolle- Hey, there's no need to go off on Thanatos. I'm sure inside he's... well, if he had a heart, or soul, or anything like that, he'd be... passable. Maybe. Thanks for the link.

FireOpal- Nope, not Ginny. The answer will come, and when it does, I hope to hear a mass of foreheads being slapped.

Sweetistkiss- Mmm... sorry. Can't answer that. There are some plot points I'm not willing to share.

harrysmom- Pure, definitely. But the emotion pathway is not the way to go. Emotions are key, they're not the path. (Yes, I enjoy being cryptic)

Kyle Broflovski- More nefarious though. Definitely more nefarious... and Thanatos hasn't lost.

darkangelgep- Guy. And yes, I am quite the sadist.

And thanks to the rest for reviewing: Vegita43, Pleione, FroBoy, Zeromaru Chaos Mode, Night-Owl123, Oomahey, Emma Barrows, Discombobulatedperson, The Best wick of all, YamiClara, Sweetistkiss, Draco'sLovergirlver, moonlightpixie89, 3232, mashimaromadness, Dobbey, BellonaBellatrix.

AN: The lines from the memories are of course, from the first five Harry Potter books, which, as stated in the disclaimer, I do not own. Lastly, it'd be very, very good if you'd join my Yahoo group! There you can get updates a lot faster and discuss this and other of my stories.

## Chapter 22 Chiaroscuro

POSSESSION

VIOLATION

CONTROL

DOMINATION

FEAR

SHAME

DEATH

Within the darkness of her own mind and soul, Ginny Weasley screamed.

Outside of the Hospital Wing, Harry Potter clenched his fist as he heard the scream. There was nothing he could do. Within the infirmary, Order members, hysterical Weasleys ran amuck, their efforts to calm or bring sanity back to the young girl in vain.

“Damn you...” he whispered softly, hatred suffused in every syllable.

Albus Dumbledore moved to stand next to the spirit. “How is she?” he asked quietly.

“How do you think she is, having her worst memories and feelings thrown in her face?” the Boy-Who-Lived spat viciously, a sidelong glare flung at the Headmaster.

Sighing, the old man nodded. “I will attempt to contact some Obliviators we can trust. They may be able to help us.”

“I won’t feel better until I’ve killed that bastard with my own hands.” Harry replied harshly.

Dumbledore inwardly winced at the tone. “Harry, what happened?” he questioned softly.

A quiet chuckle, bitter and cruel, burst from the spirit's lips. "Voldemort is dead. Then that effing bastard tortured me. A real nice day."

Stiffening, the Headmaster asked rigidly, "What happened when they fought?"

Looking at Ginny with pained eyes, Harry responded bitterly, "Thanatos absorbed Voldemort's powers and his soul. He made it look absurdly easy."

"I see."

Whirling, the spirit yelled angrily, "DO YOU! My friend is lying there, being tortured without any respite! And on top of that, the person responsible happens to be my own Darkness!"

"It wasn't you."

"THE HELL IT WASN'T! I couldn't stop him..." Harry whispered softly, full of self loathing.

There was something more bothering the Boy-Who-Lived, something deeper, the Headmaster realized. "Harry... what did Tom tell you?"

After a moment, the story came forth.

How Harry's infant soul had been split in two.

How Thanatos was just the pure Darkness of Harry's heart.

How the two were irrevocably intertwined, and the death of one meant the death of both.

When it was over, Dumbledore realized that once more, he was crying in front of Harry.

"Do you see?" Harry whispered softly, a sob choking him. Then a glint appeared in his eyes. One that narrowly edged between ecstatic

determination and insanity. "I need you to kill me sir. Kill me and put an end to this mess."

The Headmaster took a step backwards, mouth open and gaping. "Harry..."

The glint became harder than diamond, and crossed the line. "It's for the best sir. Do it."

"I..." the Headmaster hesitated. For a decade and a half he had protected the boy... now, after all that work, all the care he held in his heart... now he had to kill him. "I need to think." With that, Dumbledore turned and left.

Albus Dumbledore took solace in his office, in the comfort of the former Headmasters and his phoenix. The Second War was over... but in its place, was something even worse. A single entity capable of consuming all life on the planet.

"How did everything go so wrong Fawkes?" the Headmaster

"Talking to birds?"

Dumbledore froze. His head turned slowly, till his gaze rested upon Thanatos, who leaned against the wall of the office, smirking.

Fawkes screeched angrily, lifting from his perch to attack the demon. Before the Headmaster could stop the phoenix, it lunged forward.

With a cruel laugh, Thanatos grasped Fawkes by the neck and squeezed tightly. The audible snap of bones breaking was heard, and then a dark cloud devoured the phoenix.

"I think I broke your pet." He said, faux apologetically.

Rage burned in the Headmaster's heart as he raised his wand to deliver a Blinding Light spell. Before he could, the Darkness swarmed in around him, pinning him in place.

Thanatos tutted. "Now, now, let's not start a fight. I'd hate for this to get broken."

Dumbledore didn't answer, focusing his magic until it radiated out of him, disrupting the holding magic the demon had created. With a shout, a brilliant flash erupted from his wand.

The eidolon snarled viciously, raising his hand to shield himself from the Blinding Light spell. Within moments, the shadows had once more taken control, extinguishing the light.

"Gotta do better." The demon hissed, raising his hand and swinging it forward. From it came a wave of umbra, which crashed into the shield the Headmaster had barely managed to create.

Jet black sparks danced across Thanatos' fingertips and he grinned. "This is getting fun."

Harry Potter shivered slightly, which was definitely abnormal for a disembodied spirit. Something was bothering him...

Deciding that talking with Dumbledore again might help, he began the long drift towards the office, only to find that the cold feeling in his gut was increasing...

A rain of golden beams battered the demon's inky shield, causing Thanatos to stumble backwards. A roaring sound and a powerful spell later, he was sent flying backwards, crashing into one of the many cabinets in the room.

The Headmaster's office had become a battleground, with various pieces of debris scattered about as the demon and the professor dueled.

Tendrils of Darkness lashed out, whipping through the air, intent on striking Dumbledore, who narrowly avoided the strikes. His response, in the form of a surge of golden thunder, tore through the air, actually connected with the eidolon, sending the creature through the wall, and down the staircase.

His wand raised, Dumbledore descended down the shattered doorway, towards where Thanatos lay, shrouded in a miasma of smoke and dust.

And then, that damnable laughter cut through the air again, dark and mocking, and smoke gave way to shadow. Thanatos took form again, his black hair singed at the edges, his clothing burnt. In a blink, they returned to their original state. As he laughed, a ball of inky darkness manifested in front of his torso. The demon's eyes narrowed, and the ball rocketed forward.

With a flick of his wand, the Headmaster sent the remains of the door flying, blocking the attack. In an instant, the wood was eaten away into nothingness.

A second, navy colored spell leapt from Dumbledore's wand, which Thanatos ducked expertly. He grinned, lunging for the old man-

And was caught on something. The eidolon turned around to glimpse a moving stone, and then was struck hard in the face. Thanatos stumbled backwards, caught off guard by the animated gargoyle. He snarled, and a wave of shadow sent the statue flying, to crash against the far wall.

But he had turned his back on the Headmaster, and paid for it as another spell tore through the air and struck him from behind, sending him flying, straight into the gargoyle's grasp.

Before Thanatos could move again, he felt a wand pressing against his temple. Dumbledore's cold blue eyes stared into his charcoal ones, neither budging an inch.

"You can't kill me." The demon taunted, grinning maniacally. "Not without killing your precious Potter."

Hesitation flickered in the Headmaster's eyes.

It was all the eidolon needed. The shadows that were ever present around his body lunged forward, entangling the Headmaster in a cocoon of darkness. Meanwhile, power pooled in his palm, which he loosed on the gargoyle's foot.

The animated creature stumbled, off balance with only one foot, letting go of the demon. In a blink of Time, Thanatos had spun, and

demolished the statue, his shadowy tendrils still wrapped tightly around the old man.

Darkness coalesced around his palm, manifesting into that black blade that took Voldemort from this world. The demon grinned like a Cheshire cat.

“Thanatos!”

Said creature cocked his head and turned, glancing at the just arrived Boy-Who-Lived. “Look, an audience.” He drawled, raising the blade.

Dumbledore glanced at Harry, defeated, tired, and looking deathly ill. “Its up to you now, Harry.” He whispered softly.

And then Thanatos rammed his sword into the Headmaster’s chest.

Albus Percival Wulfuric Brian Dumbledore, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, the Chairman of the International Confederation of Wizards, and head of the Order of the Phoenix, fell, his body falling slowly, slowly, slowly to the ground, as the demon laughed.

What the hell could be the reason for his death? So much death and destruction... Hermione’s dead, Ginny’s in locked in St. Mungo’s, and now Dumbledore...

Thanatos began laughing, laughing his cold, mocking laugh again, and Harry’s blood did not run cold and freeze up, but boiled with unrestrained fury. Warmth poured through his veins, like the blinding sun banishing the darkness, bringing hope instead of despair.

Harry remembered Dumbledore’s kind smile, how he fiercely defended Harry at the battle at the Department of Mysteries, how he had taken every precaution, however unwarranted and unwanted, to protect him.

More memories came crashing down, now of Hermione. That bossy, bushy headed eleven year old.



The crying, helpless eleven year old who needed saving from a giant troll.

And the memories just washed over him, as the Thanatos gloated and laughed as Dumbledore fell.

The Dumbledore who cried after giving Harry the prophecy, whose endless vitality had kept Harry's spirits up and his belief strong that another day would come, whose wisdom guided Harry on the path he needed.

Of the dead girl Hermione, who had been the closest thing he had to an older sister, bossing him around and mothering him and caring for him. Who died at the hands of this monster.

Just like Dumbledore.

Of the broken, violated Ginny Weasley, who lay in a coma within the Hogwarts infirmary. Who had endured so very much already, starting with the violation of her body, the terrible feeling of being used by the Dark Lord. And then Thanatos violated her mind, raped her of her memories and forced her to endure untold torment, sending her into a world of dancing nightmares and endless horrors.

Another victim of the Darkness.

Just like Dumbledore.

Finally, Albus Dumbledore's body hit the ground, a resounding thud echoing throughout the room, the death knell of the greatest sorcerer of the age.

And Harry felt his own tears begin to fall, diamonds falling from emeralds, feeling warmth surging through him, the belief of Dumbledore, the need to protect the last of his loved ones, the desire to destroy this demon. His knuckles tightened, clenched until they were white and almost about to pop out of his proverbial skin, his hands shaking along with his eyebrow and eyes, which were closed.

Harry couldn't hear the responses, feeling the rage and injustice of this death, all the deaths, begin to swell within him. This wasn't right.

The inner hero complex began to rise, but also, what gave birth to it, Harry's inherent desire to correct the world, stemming from his wishes a child that his life would change for the better. Harry felt it, a burning desire, and his own self-hatred.

Why couldn't he do anything to stop this!

It wasn't right!

Why did he come back, if all he could do was watch! There had to be something he could do!

IT WASN'T RIGHT!

He would do something to stop this, stop this evil that had taken root and life within him!

IT WASN'T RIGHT!

It was his mess to clean up, and he would stop this demon himself, no matter what.

IT WASN'T RIGHT!

Echoing the night of the demon's awakening, when Bellatrix Lestrange, the eidolon's first kill, Harry felt something surge through him, something so utterly impossible and yet undeniably real, something with the power to end everything.

But it wasn't cold, creeping darkness. It was blazing, brilliant light, the warmth, the charging rush that felt like sunlight had suffused itself within his veins and his body, as if his core had turned white hot and as powerful and bright as the glowing orb of the heart of the very sun itself.

Around him, the air around Harry began to glow brighter and brighter, and a spider web of cracks began to form around his feet, cracking

and rustling and creeping around his legs. The glow seemed a purer reflection of Thanatos' all encompassing aura of darkness, burning the shadows away from Harry.

Thanatos cry of anger and protest was not even heard by Harry, drowned out by the incessant chatter and rush of flooding sound that drowned Harry's senses, blinding him to all.

Brighter and brighter and bright he glowed, as if he had become the sun, no longer silver but brightest gold, a phosphorescence of light burning around him, illuminating the room, as his brilliant radiance began to grapple with the unfathomable darkness of Thanatos, light struggling to overpower the darkness.

The spider web grew larger and larger and more expansive, as the very air began to heat up warmly, but not uncomfortably, as the ground began to break apart, forming tiny obelisks of stone that shot up from the ground. The cracks continued to grow larger and larger until a circle around Harry's feet burst into a crater, but Harry's feet stayed where they were, holding him above the ground itself, hovering inches above the ground, as if the ground found itself unworthy any longer to touch the feet of the Boy-Who-Lived.

It was then that Harry let out a loud cry of rage and love and wrath, letting his feelings loose, his eyes snapping open, emerald now mixed with golden bright, unclenching his fists and leaving them in a fist after flexing them, claw-like, and his cry was echoed by a sudden shockwave of compressed atmosphere that sent everything in the area, except Thanatos, toppling over. The demon in question simply stood his ground and glared angrily, not trying stop the transcendence of the Boy-Who-Lived.

But as if he had been jolted back to reality by the blast of air, the eidolon's darkness suddenly surged around him, Darkness that surpassed all other darkness that had come before. Black and empty, that power surged forward to grapple with the blindingly pure light.

In response, the glow around Harry intensified, burning away the darkness, golden bright and glowing brighter with each passing second of mortal time, his silvery skin seeming golden, his clothing

auriferous, his ebon hair thrown into stark relief, as his luminous blaze continued to grow and grow. His prism-like eyes, that danced with so many shades of began green and gold, began to leak golden mist, as if his very tears had begun to echo the golden power within him.

Furious at having been caught off guard, the Darkness once more surged around Thanatos, a stark contrast, the emptiness of the abyss at the light of the heavens.

Harry's beaming and blazing emerald eyes, like two suns going nova, turned slowly, and locked towards Thanatos, his body not moving an inch, only his eyes. Ablaze emerald met abyssal black, and the two looked into the other's eyes, seeing the opposite of themselves, dark seeing light, light seeing dark.

The most brilliant contrasted as shadow and light blinded all but their avatars.

For a moment, all was chiaroscuro and silence.

And then the avatar of Light spoke. Not roared, not screamed, but spoke.

Opening his mouth, his tone final and utterly oozing conviction, his voice as beyond question as the inevitability of death itself, his eyes glowing with righteous and undeniably almighty fury.

"No more."

Review Response

harrysmom- The answer is quite simple. Darkness can only be driven out by Light. I'm sorry to have kept you guessing for this long, but the answer is finally revealed!

Vegita43- A whole host of manga, sugar, insanity, and Angel Season 4 went into this story. No muses were harmed in its making.

PinkyTheSnowman- With all this terror and death, do you really expect there to be a happy ending?

Lady of Masbolle- Its okay. As you can see, fury and a desire to correct the world, creates Harry's power.

Nippledora Tweaks- Thank you. That's all I wanted, though I don't appreciate the insinuation that I'm some sort of psychopath. I am aware that this story is horribly OOC and poorly organized. That's what I get for not planning my story out.

Also thanks to darkangelgep, mashimaromadness, Emma Barrows, GreyGranian, Julie Long, TwoBrokenToCry, ewww, YamiClara, APS, Catnip070, lordvitris, Black Rose Faith, Pleione, BiTcHOf eViL, and Dreamsprite5for reviewing.

AN: Chiaroscuro is an art form and an Italian word. It's a sharp contrast between light and dark, making it perfect for this chapter. If you've enjoyed this story, or wish to discuss it further, join my Yahoo group. Link is in the profile, under homepage. Next chapter is the last, I'm sad to say.

## Chapter 23 Contra Ipsum

“No more.”

Shadows flickered, dancing with the light.

Neither Light nor Darkness moved.

A battle between the two greatest powers in the world, Good and Evil, a battle unlike any ever experienced, was about to be fought.

With a cry, Thanatos charged, thrusting his black sword forward. Harry Potter spun aside, not fully understanding the powers surging through his veins, but deigning to use them regardless.

Remembering the demon’s ability to shoot lightning, the Boy-Who-Lived concentrated, willing his power to lunge forward.

It didn’t lunge.

It soared with divine grace towards the eidolon of Darkness with impossible speed, a streak of golden lightning that detonated its force onto his chest.

And then the impossible happened. Thanatos began to scream, a scream of pure, unbridled agony, the kind of scream that only one who has never been hurt can scream. The demon fell backwards, clutching his seared torso, his black blade falling to the floor before it dissipated into smoke.

With an advantage and hatred on his side, Harry fired more lightning, golden streaks of light that ripped the air to shreds.

This time, Thanatos was prepared, and swung his hand out in an arc. A vortex of darkness swirled around him, deflecting the storm, kicking up small twisters of dust and debris where the lightning was redirected.

“Now that... was impressive.” The creature managed slowly, even as the shadows began to stitch his wounds back together. “This might just be the most fun I’ll ever have.”

The word fun set the Boy-Who-Lived off, fury pounding through his veins once more, and he lunged forward, swinging his fist angrily. Thanatos turned sharply, and delivered a blow to Harry’s back.

The Eidolon of Light staggered forward, screaming as his back sizzled. Smiling, the demon struck again, and again, and again, a rising chorus of pain and screaming agony, with him as its mad orchestrator.

Harry stumbled forward, and fell to the floor, back burnt hellishly. He lay limp, and the light dimmed around him, making his body the normal light silver.

Thantaos laughed...

And then was cut off, as the Boy-Who-Lived... lived again.

The damage done was undone, and Harry glared defiantly as he turned.

“Interesting.” The demon murmured. “If I can’t beat you to death, then how about decapitation, evisceration, or just gutting you like a fish!” he snarled, and his black sword coalesced into his palm.

Leaping backwards, the Boy-Who-Lived, in a burst of inspiration, closed his eyes. The light around him began swirling into a storm of luminescence, until it finally solidified into a sword. A bright, golden metal blade that seemed to shine with the same glow that he held himself with.

“Have some originality, for Christ’s sake!” Thanatos muttered, and leapt forward, the blade of Evil meeting the blade of Light.

Sparks scattered from the impact, and the very magic around them began twisting upon itself. Over their respective blades, the two Eidolons glared at each other hatefully.

Then, as one, they twisted away from each other, spinning themselves and striking again. Once more, their blades met, inverting the fabric of reality around them.

Harry pulled his right fist back, which began glowing with golden might. Thanatos did the same with his left, and his fist darkened with the power of the abyss. They struck, their fists striking the other's face on opposite sides.

Both felt the pain, and both reeled backwards. With a snarl, Harry and Thanatos leapt at each other again, their anathema blades meeting again with a resounding clang.

On and on, they danced a waltz of blades, duck, slash, parry, thrust, on and on.

Furious at the stalemate, Thanatos leapt backwards, avoiding the gleaming blade easily. He raised an arm and loosed a storm of black lightning, which hissed as it tore through the air.

Eyes wide, Harry raised his hand, palm outstretched to block the attack. A wall of blinding light surged forward and met the obsidian storm, sending waves of power lashing outwards.

Both combatants were sent flying, Harry slipping through the stone wall and out onto the grounds, and Thanatos into a stone wall.

As the Boy-Who-Lived attempted to regain his bearings, the Eidolon of Darkness blasted a hole through the castle wall, and leapt down. The immense height didn't even effect the demon, who stood up from the fall as if he had merely tripped.

The spirit turned just in time to see Thanatos fire another storm of shadowy lightning at him. Unable to block in time, Harry took the full fury of the storm head on, and was sent crashing backwards, screaming in agony.

With a triumphant snarl, Thanatos grabbed Harry's throat and lifted him into the air. The spirit struggled, but the dark held him in place.



The demon pulled back his arm, and that orb of nightmares that sent Ginny into a horror-induced coma coalesced in his palm.

“Pleasant nightmares.” He snarled, and slammed the inky orb into Harry’s face.

“Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!”

“Stand aside, you silly girl... stand aside, now...”

“Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead- Not Harry! Please... have mercy... have mercy...”

“Wands out, y’reckon?”

“Kill the spare.”

“AVADA KEDAVRA!”

“Bow to death Harry.”

It seemed to take Sirius an age to fall. His body curved in a graceful arc as he sank backward through the ragged veil hanging from the arch...

“SIRIUS! SIRIUS!”

“There’s nothing you can do, Harry...nothing... He’s gone.”

“He hasn’t gone!”

“SHE KILLED SIRIUS! SHE KILLED HIM-I’LL KILL HER!”

“Ah... did you love him, little baby Potter?”

“CRUCIO!”

“Never used an unforgivable curse before, have you boy? You need to mean them, Potter! You need to really want to cause pain- to enjoy it- righteous anger won’t hurt me for long- I’ll show you how it is done, shall I? I’ll give you a lesson-”

And then Harry's scar burst open. He knew he was dead: it was pain beyond imagining, pain past endurance-

He was gone from the hall, he was locked in the coils of a creature with red eyes, so tightly bound that Harry did not know where his body ended and the creature's began. They were fused together, bound by pain, and there was no escape-

And when the creature spoke, it used Harry's mouth, so that in his agony he felt his jaw move...

"Kill me now, Dumbledore..."

Blinded and dying, every part of him screaming for release, Harry felt the creature use him again...

"If death is nothing, Dumbledore, kill the boy..."

"CRUCIO!"

In raw, terrible agony of the mind, Harry Potter screamed, falling to floor as Thanatos released him from his terrible grasp.

The demon laughed. "Look at the big hero now, screaming in agony." He taunted, and leaned into Harry's ear. "Not so high and mighty now."

He turned away, and placed his hands behind his back. "That's the trouble with you heroes." Thanatos looked over his shoulder at the screaming spirit. "You get so caught up in your own problems you can't even find the world you're trying to save." He remarked, shaking his head.

The Boy-Who-Lived continued to scream. His conscious mind was on the brink of breaking, as memories came like a relentless flood. Through his jumbled thoughts and recollections, he briefly noted that the Eidolon of Darkness was right.

Thanatos walked back over to the fallen hero, and placed his head next Harry's ear. "You failed, Harry." The demon murmured quietly, "You failed everyone. You failed Hermione, you failed Ginny, you failed Dumbledore." He sighed with fake regret and pulled back, straightening. "They're all gone now... just like you will be."

He's right... I lost... Harry managed to think, closing his eyes as more memories assaulted him.

He grasped Harry's form, lifting the Boy-Who-Lived by the throat. "I'm going to bury you so deep in me that you'll never see the light... ever." Thanatos whispered spitefully. "And all those sacrifices, all those people you didn't save... their deaths will become meaningless."

"Harry!"

The demon turned, a large, vicious smile on his face. "Well, well, well. The useless sidekick finally turns up." He murmured. "And just what do you think you'll accomplish, boy? I've killed wizards twice as strong as you... and I've killed a witch twice as smart as you." Thanatos sneered, still holding on to the spirit.

Ron glared. "I know I can't kill you... I'm here for Harry." He said quietly, unafraid of death. At least then, he would see Hermione again.

"Oh, is this the part where you say some sort of rousing speech, 'Good over Evil, Light over Darkness, hang in there kitten it's almost Friday!'" Thanatos snarled mockingly, and laughed his cruel laugh. "Don't bother."

Ignoring the demon's taunts, Ron focused on his best friend. "Harry... Thanatos is right. If you give up now, you'll be letting all those deaths go unpunished." His fists clenched. "You'll be letting Hermione's death go unpunished." He said quietly, in barely a whisper.

Hermione... the Boy-Who-Lived remembered his rage, his fury... he remembered promising himself as Ginny fell into a nightmare induced coma that he would kill Thanatos...

New memories flooded him, memories of good times and times that were now forever gone, thanks to this monster.

Harry's eyes snapped open, clear and lucid.

Thanatos turned, and his obsidian eyes met Harry's emerald.

"Son of a-" that was all the demon had time to say before Harry's fist came crashing into his face.

As the Eidolon of Darkness staggered backwards drunkenly, the Boy-Who-Lived floated slightly, nodding gratefully at Ron. "Thanks... but you've got to go now. Before he tried to use you against me." The spirit said quietly.

Reluctantly, the redhead nodded, and retreated back to the castle, but not before he said one final piece. "Get him." Ron said quietly. "And good luck."

And as the redhead ran, he got the distinct feeling that was the last time he would ever see his best friend again.

As the Boy-Who-Lived could turned, Thanatos punched him in the face. "Hello, battle with your alter ego going on here!"

"I remember," Harry snarled, and loosed a storm of golden light.

But the demon caught the attack in his hand, and with a triumphant smirk, tossed it aside. "You're new to this gig. I'm not." He whispered, and punched the Boy-Who-Lived in the face.

As the Eidolon of Light stumbled backwards, Thanatos spoke again, in an admonishing tone. "Why do you insist on fighting me, when you know that no matter what happens, you will lose."

Harry glared at the demon. "Killing my best friends, torturing and killing innocent people... and you just kind of piss me off." He replied, and lashed out with a luminous energy blast-

Which Thanatos backhanded away contemptuously, and stared piercingly at the spirit. "You're going to die."

"Yeah... but that satisfaction of seeing you die makes it worth it." Harry snarled, and tried to punch the demon again, only to have the creature spin aside.

"You don't have it in you." The dark half taunted, unshakable. "Do you know why?" Before the Boy-Who-Lived could answer, Thanatos kicked him in the chest. "Because every dark thought, every murderous impulse is me..." he fired a writhing shadow into Harry's knee, causing the hero to fall to the floor, "and you don't have a single trace of Darkness in you."

Thanatos paused, standing over his Good counterpart. "And that's why I'll win." He raised his foot to stomp the Eidolon of Light's head in. The foot came crashing down-

And was caught by Harry's hand. His eyes narrowed and his mouth curled into a snarl as he shoved his dark doppelganger backwards. "You're wrong..." the Boy-Who-Lived hissed, raising his palm, where a miniature sun coalesced, "I'm just as ruthless as you... and those who fear the Dark have never seen what the Light can do!" to put an exclamation point on his sentence, the orb of light tore through the air, striking the demon in the chest.

As Thanatos hit the dirt, his chest seared and smoking, Harry ruthlessly towered over him, and grabbed at the demon's shirt, pulling his face close to the Boy-Who-Lived's. With a feral growl, he punched his dark half in the face. "I have the impulse, I have the power, and I will kill you!" With each declaration, he punctuated it with a vicious blow to the demon's face.

However, even as the third punch connected, Thanatos roared, and a wave of shadows sent Harry soaring into the air, until he managed to stabilize, hovering a few inches off the ground.

"But you can't, you won't kill me." The Boy-Who-Lived finished, smirking.

"Clever boy." The demon murmured, wiping his face clear of blood, even as the shadows fixed him. "But you're wrong... I can kill you!"

Thanatos shouted, and his black blade appeared in his hand, just as it descended towards Harry's head.

But the Eidolon of Light was prepared, and raised his golden sword into the air, the two opposing blades meeting with a fierce shout.

With identical snarls, the two leapt backwards, and fired off blasts of pure shadow or light, respectively. Easily, both Eidolons dodged the energy attacks, and tried to cut each other to pieces again.

However, their thoughts, hell bent on destroying one another and nothing else, caused their attacks to meet equally, and thus, create another stalemate.

As they glared at each other, over their blades, Thanatos leaned in, and whispered his words into Harry's face. "This will never end boy... Light and Dark have struggled for Eternity... and so it shall be with us."

Even as he strained against the demon's sword, the Boy-Who-Lived knew this was true. Every move Thanatos made, Harry countered, and vice versa.

Voldemort's words returned to him in a flash. Your existence is tied to his, and if one of you is destroyed, it is quite likely the other will be too.

At that moment, the awful truth about what had to happen was revealed to Harry at last.

Thanatos looked puzzled as a new determination burned in his enemy's emerald eyes, and the Boy-Who-Lived drew backwards, blade still raised.

"You're fixin to do something stupid, Potter..." Thanatos said, advancing on his counterpart.

"Already did... the day I let you come into being." Harry replied. "And now, I'm undoing that mistake." With a single fluid movement, he reversed the golden sword, its point at his chest.

“NO!” Thanatos screamed, and leapt, blade raised.

But it was too late.

The sword of Light plunged into the Boy-Who-Lived’s chest, and even as his mouth opened in a silent scream, Thanatos began to vocalize the agony.

After a moment, the expression on Harry’s face changed into a satisfied smile, even as the demon’s transformed into one of pure hatred.

And then, as one, Harry Potter disappeared, and Thanatos’ dead body fell to the floor.

## Epilogue: Wake

It was that time of year again.

With a grave look on his face, the wizard descended down the steps of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, dressed in all black-mourner's clothes.

The walk seemed short, as usual, mostly do to the feelings that accompanied this annual journey.

Eventually, he reached the quiet, secluded grove where they had erected the grave. Oh yes, there was that large, fancy mausoleum where they supposedly had his body, but in truth, this was more important.

This was the site where Harry James Potter's body, was buried, right alongside Hermione Granger.

They would have liked to place Dumbledore there as well, but the press was too great, and only one body could be snuck away.

With a soft sigh, the wizard placed the flowers on the grave of Hermione Granger. They were roses, red ones, signifying love. And then he placed yellow roses on Harry Potter's grave, the rose of friendship.

"Hey guys... it's been three years... I actually passed the N.E.W.T.'s, Mione... did pretty well." He said quietly, chuckling slightly. "It's been hard... on all of us. Mum still cries whenever she's reminded of you, or of Ginny..."

He paused, clearing his throat and blinking away unshed tears. "Speaking of which... the Healer's say they're working on a new treatment, to deal with insanity victims. Neville actually went to work with them, which I guess makes sense, seeing as how his parent's are affected too."

Damn throat... it's clenching up again.



“McGonagall replaced Dumbledore as Headmaster... and Snape,” the wizard said with some distaste, “Is Deputy Headmaster... I pity the poor sods who have him for Headmaster.” He chuckled, shivering slightly.

“I got accepted into Auror training... though I have to take a Remedial course for Potions before I actually start.” He murmured, annoyance in his voice. “If Snape hadn’t been such a prat, I would have gotten in...”

Realizing he was rambling, the wizard knew he had to finish. “I still miss you guys... and it still hurt... I can’t roll eyes with you whenever Mione gets too studious, and I can’t bicker with you anymore, Hermione.” He coughed, and a small tear fell from his eye, impacting the grave.

“But I keep on living... because I know that I’ll see you guys again, on the other side.” Ron whispered.

“I’ll see you guys next year.”

And then he turned, and left the quiet graves, undisturbed in shadow.

Fin.

Review Response

QueenWeasel- Hey... I resent that! I can have a nice, happy ending... if I chose. And in the beginning, I started out thinking this would end well... but then... I sorta caught my own words, and revised it. (Just joking. I'm not really angry)

PinkyTheSnowman- It really does... feels almost like a whole year... which it almost was.

Bplaya- To be honest, it actually was a burst of inspiration on one summer night, but as time went on, it grew up. And so did I.

drgn prncss- Because Evil jacks up the IQ, and thus, the wit. Standard thing, really.

Lady of Masballe- What is the Great Break? It wouldn't happen to be that mass exodus of writers who have left ffn, is it? And have fun in NZ... never been there before.

And also thanks to FroBoy, Bukama Stealth, Quillian, japanese-jew, Harrie, darkangelgep, Emma Barrows, Matt, DreamSprite5, yorkvillebird, Psychoangel, hp-luver2016, Black Rose Faith, LordyPoo, Discombobulatedperson, bunky64, LuciferIsDivine, harrysmom, nightcrawler, and PersonaJXT for reviewing!

#### Author's Final Remarks

What started as a Yu-Gi-Oh (yes, it's true) inspired fic, became this truly massive thing about Light and Dark that I couldn't see it becoming. I loved writing Thanatos, from his witticisms down to his sadistic side. There were some bad points, and points where I knew I could have done better... but in the end, here it is, almost a year later, finally complete, and I'm satisfied with it. It's been quite a trip, and I'm glad you shared it with me.

There will not be a sequel, nor any other stories set in this universe... I think. Perhaps a one-shot or this fic ended on a note that I'd like to keep it at.

Until next we meet, take care of yourselves, and each other.

(Couldn't help the Jerry Springer moment... this thing was dysfunctional as hell anyway.)